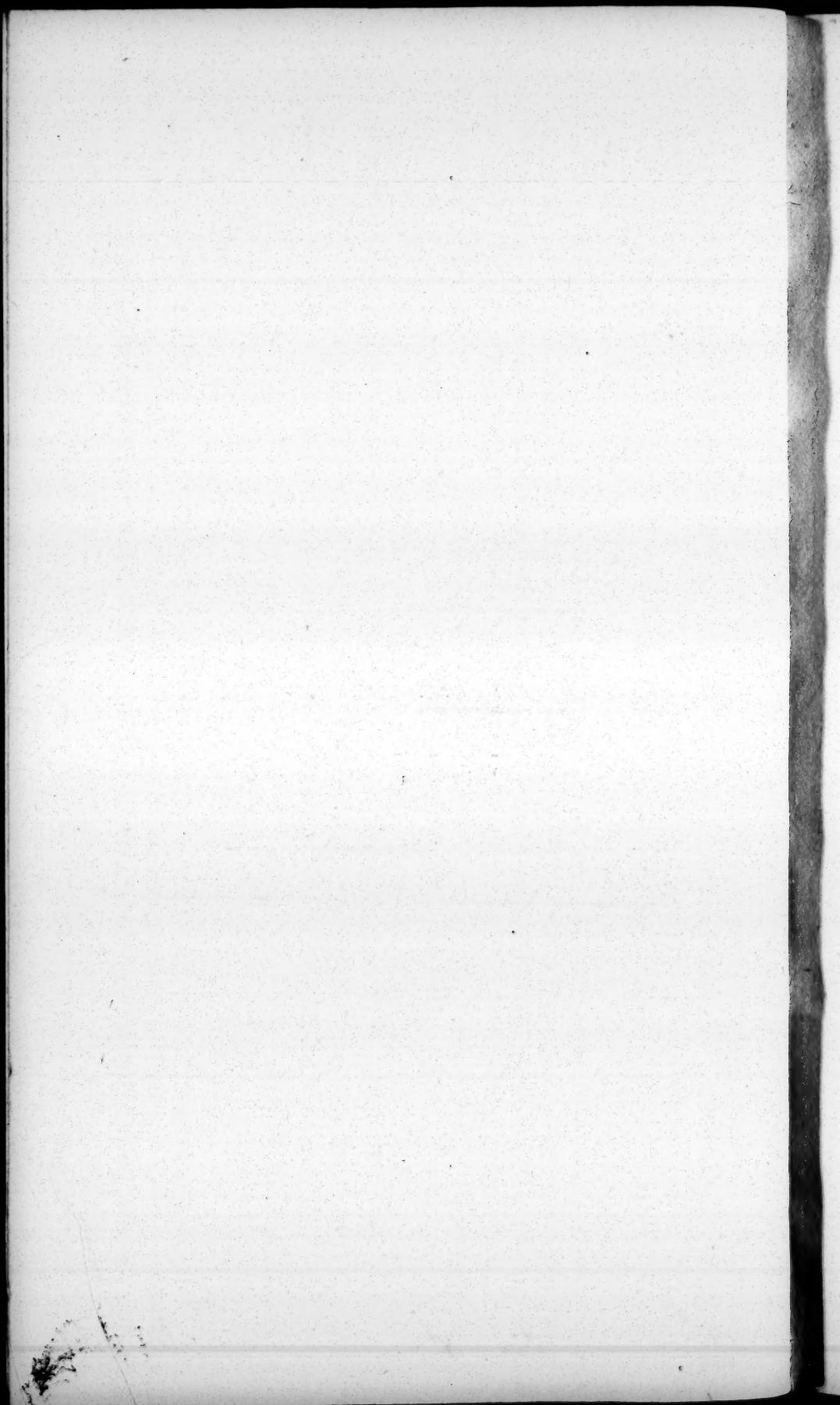

T E R E N T I A ;
A N O V E L .



TERENTIA;

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE PLATONIC GUARDIAN, &c.

D U B L I N :

Printed by Wm. Hunter,

FOR MESS. P. BYRNE, A. GRUBBER, W. M'KENZIE,

J. HALPEN, R. M'ALLISTER,

AND R. WHITE.

1793.



MEMOIRS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

SCARCELY had the elevated note of the lark serenaded the husbandman to his labour, or the rays of the sun enlivened the coming day, when the inhabitants of Hatfield Place were put into the utmost confusion, by the sudden death of its master, who, in consequence of a fit, had breathed his last, while his servant was preparing to equip him for a ride he was to take before breakfast.

The family, I say, was in the utmost confusion; but its most poignant grief was lodged in the bosom of its fair mistress, who had been put under the care of the deceased, at so early a period of her life, as that of her first year, on whom she was entirely dependant, and to whom she was indebted for a liberal education, and every other indulgence, which the humanity of a heart *formed*, though *misguided*, for every social virtue, could dictate; but how was this grief increased—how did the sombre cloud of despair overwhelm her soul, when the steward informed her he had died insolvent; that an execution was already in the house; and that he expected

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nothing

nothing less than an arrest on the body would ensue! Ah! she exclaimed, and have I lived to see the kind protector of my infant state exposed to such ignominy as this! Cannot you, Mr. Bankerton, after all his excess of kindness, by some means save, his corpse at least, from the sacrilegious gripe of those insatiate creditors?

Bankerton was one of those *wife* stewards, who make a point of turning the carelessness of their masters to their own advantage—he had amassed a very comfortable sufficiency, in order to solace himself, as it was supposed, in his declining life, with all the indulgencies that period requires—there were some malicious people too, who did not scruple to hint, that he had so much imposed on the credulity of his master (who had ever placed an implicit confidence in his honesty) as to make him pay interest for his own money. Be that as it may, he had done all in his power, by studying a plainness of dress, and taking every other method to make himself entitled to the character of a *prudent saving* man, in order to blind the world in general, as well as to confuse hints, which sometimes fell from those of his fellow servants, who happened to be out of favour, to his prejudice; and as this was not the moment to discover himself in his true light, he answered his young lady, as follows:

“ Alack-a-day, Miss! how do you suppose a servant, like me, should be able to discharge his creditors! I have, Heaven knows, lost much by his neglect already; besides I do not think it prudent to entangle myself in his affairs—it had been well for me, if I had served a more frugal master; for now, instead of
having

having a comfortable support in my old age, I am expected to spend my poor mite, to rescue this imprudent from the hands of his relentless creditors; and as to the body, why, good lack, what does it signify? I wish to heaven I could be assured his soul was admitted into the blissful mansions of the blessed."

Terentia (for so shall I call the heroine of the following sheets) who had listened with the utmost astonishment to an harangue so unexpected, so unjustifiable from a man who had ever found the warmest friendship from the deceased, was about to rebuke, with a sternness unnatural to her disposition, this ungrateful steward, for reflections which as little became him to utter, as herself to hear, when the door opened, and a gentleman of the name of Bryant, made his appearance, and checked her rising displeasure, by shewing that he possessed a heart cast in a different mould from that of Bankerton's.

This gentleman had been but a few weeks a resident in the village, and consequently knew little of Mr. Hatfield, or our fair mourner—but he was blessed with a benevolent heart; and that noblest propensity of the human mind would not suffer him to resist his desire of enquiring into the cause of the confusion he saw when he was taking his morning walk at the door of his deceased neighbour. In this enquiry, idle curiosity had no part; true philanthropy alone prompted the wish to be made acquainted with the cause of their apparent distress.

It was a subject that merited his attention—he followed the bent of his inclination, and,

being a foe to ostentation, wished to introduce himself to the person (whom he had learned most needed his friendship) alone and unobserved—always giving the manner of bestowing a favour the first thought, especially where the delicacy of the afflicted, as was now the case, deserved the consideration.

With this heaven-born sensation he soon arrived at the passage which led to the room where Terentia and the steward were engaged in the above conversation; and which gave him an opportunity of hearing the ingratitude of Bankerton, whose character report had been more free with than that hypocrite had imagined; and this specimen of his behaviour did not by any means heighten him in the opinion of Mr. Bryant, who dismissed him with a look of indignation, and assured Terentia she need be under no apprehension with regard to the corpse, for that he himself would take care it should not be molested."

"Oh, Sir," said the grateful Terentia, as the torrents of distressful woe fell from her eyes, "you have opened a gleam of hope to a mind almost overpowered by the loss of its only friend! but so the will of Heaven suffer his dear remains to be rescued from unhallowed hands, my own fate, hard as it is, shall not drive me to despair—yet (pointing to the cause of her distress) inanimate as him I mourn, seems every future hope of the unhappy object, whom you, Sir, so kindly compassionate."

"Be comforted, my amiable unfortunate (answered Mr. Bryant, whose eyes glistened with the tear of sympathy) I will seek out the creditors of this unfortunate gentleman, and

and try to serve you by every effort in my power. Have you any relations you would wish to consult?"

"None Sir!" replied Terentia, "not one natural friend has the wretched outcast before you, to whom she could unlock with safety the sorrows of her heart! I was left"—

"Enough, enough," cried Mr. Bryant, "I am answered; I would not add to thy distress by a retrospection of past misery for the universe! but I must leave you, to acquaint my wife, a very excellent woman, that I can now present her with what she has long wished for—lose no time in preparing to leave this scene of horror, which has already too much depressed your spirits; in a few hours she will be with you—that interim I shall dedicate to your service, by endeavouring to soften the creditors, and put a stop to any further disturbance, from those unfeeling men, who could for a moment distress you with the idea of an act, which is not only derogatory from all the humanity, but which can answer no end but that of revenge."

"Ah, Sir," answered Terentia, "how am I oppressed with this generous behaviour in a stranger! but Heaven is merciful; and in our darkest moments, by its kind interposition, rescues us from despair—thus, on my knees, suffer me to show that gratitude, which at this instant loads, as it were, my heart, and obstructs the avenues of speech; but what words, were they lent me, could shew the high sense which I have of this obligation—an obligation which I, alas! can never repay."

"I am *more* than repaid by the applause of my own heart," said Mr. Bryant, "as he

raised her from the humble position in which she had placed herself ; after which he withdrew, leaving Terentia, like one awakened from a dream, for such appeared all that had passed since she took her last friendly leave the preceding evening of Mr. Hatfield, who was at that period in perfect health—whose kindness demanded all her esteem, and for whom she had always retained a filial regard.

CHAPTER II.

In which our heroine receives a visit from a false friend, and leaves her present residence in the protection of a true one.

SCARCE had our fair mourner prepared herself for her departure from this house of woe and desolation, when a neighbouring squire, of the name of Onset, was announced.

Gladly would she have excused herself from seeing him; but as he was one of those who had visited at Mr. Hatfield's, under the denomination of a *friend*, she could not deny herself; and accordingly admitted him into her dressing-room.

I am extremely sorry (said he as he entered, followed by two hounds) to hear of your misfortune, Miss Sackville—Poor man; he was by much too good natured to live in this world—his heart was as tender as a chicken's. I have seen him sigh, when every other person in company was rejoicing, that we had caught a hare. He used to say, he did not think it right to persecute these innocent creatures (as if they were not sent for our use) I know once he argued on this matter, till we lost being in at the death, for which reason I never after attended to his lectures of humanity."

"Compassion is a heavenly virtue," said Terentia, as the torture of her mind stood confessed, by the crystal tears which bedimmed

her eyes—" I have sustained a loss, Sir, which the world cannot repair."

" Why, certainly," cried the 'squire, " it is a disagreeable circumstance for a man to die insolvent ! When once gentility has stole, as it were, into our minds, it requires no little resolution to discard it ; but if you will not think me impertinent, I can inform you how you may keep up your consequence, and appear, in the world's eyes, as gay as ever, as I really *feel* for the mortification you will be liable to, in being obliged to descend, even in the article of dress."

Terentia was silent ; yet she felt the full force of this unfeeling harangue.

The 'squire continued ; " I have been thinking all this morning how you would fight your way through the world, now that you have lost your protector ; well knowing that, with your fine turned notions, you was not much fit for domestic affairs ; and just as I fixed on a plan, Sinda there (which is the best dog that ever followed a huntsman) gave me to know that something was at hand ; well, so for the present, I gave up the thought, and soon found puffs fitting, which I have brought here to your ladyship.

Terentia bowed, though by no means gratified by this officious care in the 'squire.

After a pause of ten minutes, the 'squire proceeded—" Have you any objection to waiting on aunt Tabitha ? she is to be sure a little crabbyish, or so ; but she is in the main a very good sort of woman—and I am sure she will use you well on *my account*. Come, don't look so grave ; I intend, if you are of a grateful disposition, to make you one day

day or other Mrs. Onset—in the interim, you shall find it worth your while to oblige me ; you shall want for nothing, I assure you, if you will but return my love.”

The looks of the 'squire, had his words been less pointed, would have convinced Terentia of the full extent of his friendship, and she coolly answered,

“ I am sorry, Sir, the melancholy cause of this visit should have no other effect on your mind, than to encourage an insult, which I must own, I could never have suspected from the *friend* of the late Mr. Hatfield.”

“ Well, well,” said the 'squire, “ don't be angry—such airs as those very little become you *now*—I did not intend an affront—take time to consider of the matter ; and then, if nothing better offers, remember you need go no further than Onset Grove, to find a very good friend, that's all ”—at which words he whistled to his dogs, and took his leave, to the no small satisfaction of Terentia, who was sitting, pondering with indignant contempt on this indelicate offer, when the carriage stopped at the door, and Mrs. Bryant made her appearance.

This lady was yet but of the middle age ; and it was evident, by the still remaining beauty of her person, that she had, in her youth, been extremely handsome ; her address was insinuating, and her manners so very engaging, that the little world of her acquaintance were tempted to think her faultless—yet she was by no means above human nature ; her heart, though formed for benevolence, and eager to assist every object in distress, had a pride attending it, that could

not brook the least controul—she expected, and thought she had a right to expect, an implicit obedience from those on whom she bestowed her favours; and if once that obedience was forfeited, her friendship, if not instantly withdrawn, very rarely continued to burn with the same ardour—yet to those of her equals, where cool reasoning supplied the place of obstinate controversy, no one was more ready to give up a point, or more easily convinced of an error in judgment.

Such was the characteristic of Mrs. Bryant, who now alighted from her carriage, and who, with all the marks of a benevolent mind, embraced her new found friend, telling her every thing was ready for her reception at Bryant Hall—she added, that Mr. Bryant had persuaded the creditors to come into a composition, and that, she hoped, every thing relative to Mr. Hatfield's affairs would pass off in a manner much less terrific than she at first expected.

The gratitude of Terentia was expressed in silence; but it was a silence that conveyed a more perfect idea of that heaven-born virtue, than the most elaborate speech could have done.

Mrs. Bryant pressed her to her bosom—
“Be comforted, my dear, and look on me as your future friend; there is a sweetness in your manner, that will make it impossible I should ever be otherwise.”

“Ah, Madam! answered Terentia, how do you encourage my drooping spirits! Yes, cried she, with energy, one last look on the protector of my youth, and then adieu to this hospitable mansion for ever! Adieu too—to
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the high raised hopes which once possessed my bosom, that the day would come, when a *real father* would save his long neglected child from being a burthen to humanity."

Mrs. Bryant, whose heart shared in the sorrows of her young friend, led the weeping Terentia to the bed of the deceased, where, after suffering her to pour forth the hope of again joining him in the realms of bliss; she, with some difficulty, forced her from a scene which had nearly deprived her of her reason.

She then, with the help of her own woman, put her into the chariot—not chusing to augment the perturbation of her mind, by the kind concern which was strongly painted in the countenance of all the domestics, ordering this maid to follow them; and assuring the rest of the servants; that when the spirits of their lady could better support an interview, they should be admitted at Bryant Hall.

They found Mr. Bryant, who had just entered before them, sitting in a meditating posture—he arose, however, on their entrance, and in the tenderest manner bade his guest welcome—and then, with marks of the highest concern, he informed her, that the steward, finding his accounts were likely to be looked into, had taken the opportunity of his absence, to get off on a horse, which had been saddled (for what reason the servants, till now knew not) ever since five in the morning; that the horse had since returned, and that it was supposed the wretch had taken the road to London.

Terentia shuddered with horror at the duplicity of Bankerton, and exclaimed, "Good Heaven! what a lesson does this af-

ford to the world ! Yet, Sir, vile as I fear he is, if it hurts not the interest of the creditors, I could wish, on account of his age, that he be suffered to escape the hand of justice—if he is guilty, there is a monitor within, that will amply revenge my wrongs.”

“ Lovely humane Terentia ! ” cried Mr. Bryant, while a beam of joy enlightened his countenance, “ I rejoice to see in an age like this, a young creature endowed with such sentiments of soul-cheering humanity—the heart that can forgive injuries so flagrant, must be a jewel of inestimable value.”

“ Indeed,” said Mrs. Bryant, “ if graceful beauty, joined to sweetness of manners, and a mind stored with every social virtue, merits felicity, Miss Sackville is entitled to a large share.”

“ That I may merit such encomiums,” answered Terentia, “ suffer me, Madam, to retire, and seek, from the protection of that Being, who hovers over erring humanity, a strength of mind sufficient to enable me to bear, as I ought, this unexpected good fortune.”

“ Amiable unfortunate ! ” said Mrs. Bryant, as she left the room, “ would that Henry had yet existed ; a similarity of sentiments seems so to have marked thier characters that they could not but have rendered each other happy.”

At the mention of a son whom they had long mourned, and who had once promised them all the comfort which filial duty could insure them, a heart-rending sigh escaped the bosom of Mrs. Bryant, and wounded,
like

like an arrow new barbed, the sympathising soul of the most amiable of men.

When Terentia was summoned to dinner, she found her benefactors so exceedingly low, that her eyes asked with tender solicitude the cause of their dejection.

We lament the loss of a son, said Mrs. Bryant, whom five years since promised to inherit a mind like yours ! and whom your virtues have recalled to our memory ! a cruel shipwreck tore him from our arms, and buried him, as we suppose, in a watery grave.

Terentia expressed her sorrow for their loss, and dinner being now brought in a more general conversation took place ; after which her time was employed in consulting a milliner and mantua-maker on that alteration in her dress which the death of her friend had now made necessary.

CHAPTER III.

In which some visitors arrive, who cause much embarrassment to our heroine.

TERENTIA had spent a month with her new friends, during which, their united efforts to drive every melancholy idea from her mind, had, in a great measure, restored it to a state of serenity, when an unexpected visitor arrived at the Hall.

Miss Musgrove was by no means a favourite with Mr. Bryant, as her mind wanted that polish and feminine attraction, which, to the judicious eye, even surpasses the most finished model of perfectional beauty—but as a distant relation, she was always entertained with respect, when ever she found herself inclined to visit them.

Mrs. Bryant was, however, by no means gratified when she made her appearance, well knowing, that the narrowness of her principles would ill brook either the rare perfections, which stood confessed in both the mind and person of Terentia, or the mortification she would daily experience, in finding she stood so high in their esteem—she being one of those characters, who cannot think favourable of any, whose beauty or endowments recommend them to a degree of consequence, which they themselves rarely meet with.

Miss Musgrove viewed our heroine, from her first entrance, with that scornful neglect, which gave Mrs. Bryant room to suppose she

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was no stranger to her dependant state ; and with a view of encouraging Terentia, who, she feared, would feel herself hurt at her supercilious carriage, she took the first opportunity to introduce her as one who was in the possession of her most ardent affection, and to whom she expected from every *friend of her's*, that respect to be paid her which was due to her merits.

A flash of conscious shame now overspread the face of Miss Musgrove, and she replied, "certainly, ma'am, no *friend* is entitled to call your *choice* of acquaintance in question ; I declare, I did not observe the young *person*, or I should not have been backward to have paid my compliments to her."

"Her face," cried Mr. Bryant, smiling, "is by no means a common one, coz ; I fancy, had a young gentleman been announced, instead of you, Miss Sackville would have stood no chance of being overlooked."

"Perhaps not, Sir," answered Miss Musgrove bridling ; "ladies and gentlemen have their particular *taste* in beauty"—and then turning to Mrs. Bryant, "pray, ma'am, don't you think of spending the ensuing winter in town ?"

"I had some thoughts," replied Mrs. Bryant, "of giving up that excursion ; but as Miss Sackville is a stranger to the metropolis, I intend spending a few weeks there, for the purpose of giving her an idea of the world ; not, as you may suppose, of modernizing her into its egregious follies ; but, on the contrary, to give her an higher relish for the social and more innocent amusements of rural life."

Miss

Miss Musgrove answered, "I know, ma'am, you are exceedingly partial to rusticity," glancing her eyes at Terentia, with infinite chagrin.

While that young lady, highly gratified at the distinction paid her by her kind benefactress, suffered not the supercilious airs of Miss Musgrove to wound her peace—why, thought she, should I expect any one to be above human nature? and shall I not, were I inclined to take revenge, enjoy it more amply by forgiving, than deigning to notice her apparent ill-nature? I shall—and will so regulate my conduct in future, as to make her conscious, at least, I deserve not to be treated indignantly.

Fortified with this rectitude of thought, when Miss Musgrove, the next morning, signified her intention to walk in the park, Terentia, with the most affable sweetness, "said she was ready to attend her;" and Miss Musgrove, not caring to offend Mrs. Bryant, either was, or pretended to be, gratified by the gentleness of her manners and offered civility.

They had not walked more than half a mile from the house, when they saw a carriage drive up to it.

"Heavens!" cried Miss Musgrove in the highest good humour, "how exceeding lucky is this visit! I have been dying to see Mr. Paulet Groves by this twelvemonth—the world says, since his return from the continent, he is the most accomplished man in England—I hope he is alone, for Sir Paulet is the oddest old fellow—but as he is a distant relation of
my

my mother's, I am obliged to carry myself fair to him, although I can't endure him."

"Pray what is his character?" said Terentia—

"Why, he is like most old people who have outlived themselves! he is splenetick, distrustful, and covetous to a degree—I dare say he will be struck with terror, lest we should either of us have a thought of *trepanning* (for that is the idea he would form of the matter) the heart of his only son."

"I am obliged to you for the hint, however," said Terentia, smiling, "as it will put me on my guard against giving him any reason to suspect me capable of such treacherous felony."

"Why, as to *you*, I should suppose he would have little reason to be anxious about! Sir Paulet is in the possession of eight thousand a year."

"I am extremely happy to hear it," replied Terentia, "who felt the full force of her meaning, "as it would hurt me exceedingly to give *pain* to my bitterest enemy, more especially to any one whom Mrs. Bryant honours with her friendship."

"Well," replied Miss Musgrove, "I believe you may rest assured your sensibility will not be wounded *that way at least*; but as a *friend*, I would advise you to guard against a susceptibility, in favour of this amiable youth, which cannot, but in your situation, be productive of the most poignant anguish; as want of fortune, had you the perfections of an angel, would be a reason sufficient to raise you a formidable enemy in the old gentleman."

A shower

A shower of rain caused them now to return to the house; and gave Terentia time to ruminate on the gross and indelicate behaviour of Miss Musgrove.

Ah! thought she, as she entered her room, to take off her cloak, how is the mind, when enslaved by the galling chain of dependance, subjected to the scorn of fortune's favourites—be it my care to bear with patience those things! nor suffer me, Oh Thou who hast placed me in this abject state, to *feel* but for the weakness of human nature!

When she returned to the parlour, she found therein Sir Paulet and his son; the former, on Mrs. Bryant's introducing her young friend, condescended to say, with a stiff inclination of his head, "that she was a modest looking young woman, and that he doubted not her being deserving of the *favours* she received."

Terentia felt herself sufficiently humbled by this reception, and would gladly have quitted the room, without a second introduction; but custom demanded this conformity to its rules; and while Miss Musgrove sat tittering at her supposed rustic and uninformed manners, the same ceremony was paid to the young gentleman, who, either through the indelicate manner of his father, the rude behaviour of Miss Musgrove, or the uncommon attraction of our heroine, felt himself in a state of embarrassment little inferior to her's; he had, however, fortitude sufficient to recover himself, in some degree, from his surprise; and with a countenance expressive of that tenderness which marked his character, "said he should think himself honoured by

the acquaintance of a young lady whom Mrs. Bryant so justly esteemed."

Sir Paulet, who was ever anxious for the honour and dignity of his family, had observed, with concern, the confusion of his son; and after wrapping (as was his custom, when displeased) his under lip over his upper one, he, in a low voice said,

"I by no means like the overstrained compliment; it looks like the presage of infatuation—I wonder Mrs. Bryant should think of introducing a girl like that to a person of rank and fortune—she is by much too handsome for the sentimental heart of Paulet Grovesby—I am extremely sorry I paid this visit."

Miss Musgrove, who had marked with equal chagrin, the manner of Mr. Grovesby, and who, with infinite pleasure observed the turn in Sir Paulet, unwilling to let a fair opportunity slip of gaining the much envied Terentia, at least one enemy, now took out her eau-de-luce, and, with the most provoking sneer, walked up to young Grovesby, and said,

"Really, cousin Paulet, I am concerned to see you look so ill; the ride has absolutely been too much for you—I declare you look as pale as death; do let me get you a glass of water, and send for your physician—he is excellent, you know, for disorders of the—Lord, what was I going to say—I suppose you would not have us think your disorder was seated in your mind—yet, believe me, there is nothing like taking something by way of prevention, whatever you may think of the matter."

Mr.

Mr. Grovesby, who knew her disposition too well, not to be sensible of her malicious intent, turned carelessly from her, and without deigning to notice her harangue, began a conversation with Mr. Bryant on politics; and Sir Paulet soon joining in his favourite topic, the ladies withdrew for the purpose of changing their dress, it being now near the hour at which the family usually dined.

CHAPTER IV.

Consisting of Incidents truly mortifying.

WITH different sensations they each entered their apartments—to a heart vindictive, as that of Miss Musgrove's, contempt, such as Grovesby's, was not to be forgot—she had long formed hopes of captivating a man, whose person possessed every attraction necessary to enslave the female heart; and whose mind, not inferior to person, had gained him the esteem of all who were honoured with his acquaintance.

To have those hopes crushed by the humble and insignificant companion of Mrs. Bryant, gave her inexpressible torture, and naturally stimulated her to revenge; how, therefore, to gratify that passion, for the present, occupied her every thought.

"Yes!" cried she, exulting in the hope of succeeding, "I will crush the viper ere it lures, by its subtle wiles, the man whom I cannot but love! the stings, which she now points to my heart, shall turn to her own aspiring bosom."

Far other thoughts, though not more tranquil, possessed the mind of Terentia—the tender and delicate manner with which young Grovesby had received her, and the flattering encomium he had paid her, on being honoured, "as he said," by her friendship, when contrasted with the haughty reception she had met with from Miss Musgrove, and the still
more

more humiliating comments of the baronet, called forth that gratitude, which was the true characteristic of her soul! and she was thinking, with all the artlessness of one unpractised in deceit, how to show, with propriety, that heavenly propensity—when the discourse, which had passed between Miss Musgrove and herself, rushed into her mind, and marred the bright idea.

“ Oh no,” she cried, “ it must not be! gratitude, in *my situation*, may be productive of the most *poignant misery*; and though I have some reason to think this prediction comes not from a friend, yet it strikes me so like a *truth*, that I will profit by its unpleasing probability.”

The reflections which arose from her dependant state, did not suffer her, when summoned to dinner, to appear with that cheerfulness which she thought herself obliged to show to her kind benefactress; and fearing, lest Mrs. Bryant should notice her dejection, she withdrew, as soon as she could with propriety, and went to visit a sick person, to whom Mrs. Bryant had long been a friend.

When she came to the cottage, she found, sitting by the bed side, Mrs. Tabitha Onset; and as she did not know but she had particular business with the invalid, after putting into the hands of the poor woman, the donation with which Mrs. Bryant had intrusted her, she was about to return, when the lady, who had felt herself seriously affronted at her refusal (for such the squire, vexed at his disappointment, to her had represented it) to attend on her person, in accents not the most melodious, addressed her—

“ So

"So, Miss Terentia, you thought proper to refuse the protection I offered you—truly, I wish you don't repent it before long—the family of the Onsets are not of yesterday; though they don't keep a carriage, *as some people do*, they might perhaps have had it in their power to have rendered you as much service as them there foreigners, which you have thought proper to prefer."

"Terentia," equally surprised, and vexed at this unexpected salutation, reiterated "foreigners! Madam, I really cannot understand your meaning; and with regard to the offer of being your servant, I had not the least idea it had your concurrence; neither was I at liberty to accept your well meant kindness, being, at the time it was offered, engaged to put myself under the protection of my present benefactress."

"And pray," replied Mrs. Tabitha, "what fortune does your *kind benefactress* intend to give you? she will do you a very great injury, if she does not put it in your power to support the fine lady—the continuance of which, in my opinion, is quite out of the question—had you come to me, I should have endeavoured to have made you capable of getting your bread—I would have taught you to clear starch, make a pudding, &c. &c. but *now* you will be of no use in the world to the community, and all your time will, no doubt, be spent in reading romances—and making a gingle at your harpsichord or spinnet, or the like. I think if Mr. Hatfield had put you to a mantua-maker or quilter, or something in which you could have picked up a living, he would have acted more justly, than to leave you

you thus a burden people to whom nobody knows."

"If the cruelty of my fate, Madam, subjects me to indignity, Oh do not think yourself justified in a reflection on my deceased benefactor, whose troubles chiefly arose from an easiness of disposition, which rendered him a dupe to the artifice of those whom his own goodness of heart had made him think worthy of his confidence."

"If you mean the steward, he was served right enough. I wonder whether I should have it in my power to give my nephew five thousand pounds, if I had trusted any one but myself to manage my affairs," replied Mrs. Tabitha.

Terentia prudently gave up an argument, which she knew would be supported in vain, Mrs. Tabitha Onset being too tenacious of her own judgment, to bear opposition from any one, much less from a girl whom she considered as so much her inferior; and curtesying, took her leave in silence.

With slow and solitary steps she was ruminating on her former and present state, when stopping at a stile, which commanded a view of her late residence, she involuntarily exclaimed, Ah! where are those hours of pleasure flown, which marked the epoch of my infant state—who would wish to arrive at maturity, if all, like me, experienced a change so dark!

"Who would not," cried a voice from behind the hedge, "willingly submit to mortifications, which are but the mere productions of envy, to be mistress of half those charms which you possess!"

Struck

Struck with amazement, Terentia turned to see to whom she was indebted for this partial compliment, when the form of young Grovesby added to her confusion—"Good heavens!" thought she, "surely my evil genius this day pursues me! should Miss Musgrove, or Sir Paulet, be informed of this interview, notwithstanding it is thus accidental, how would the one be stimulated to revenge, and how would the other be incensed at the humble Terentia!"

Grovesby, in whose heart were centered every cardinal virtue, saw, and not without emotion, the terror of our heroine—and in a voice which spoke at once his delicacy and respect, without moving a step, or waiting for an answer, proceeded:

"Forgive, dearest Madam, the effusions of an heart ill at ease—from me you have nothing to dread—would I, could in any way contribute to the felicity of such excellence!—he paused—every good office, however," he continued, "within the power of Grovesby, you may command; for, rest assured, your virtues and your situation, without one interested view, have fixed me the sincerest of your friends!"

Gratified and relieved by this discovery of his sentiments, Terentia, after thanking him for the high mark of respect which he had shewn her, fearful of being discovered, tripped with hasty steps towards Bryant Hall; and it was not, till she had got within a few yards of the house, that she turned her head, to see if Mr. Grovesby had left the spot—but how was she again terrified, when she observed him standing in the same attitude in which

she left him—and at a little distance Sir Paulet and Miss Musgrove, apparently marking, with scrutinizing eye, his unusual dejection.

Young and inexperienced as she was, she had discernment sufficient to discover a storm was gathering, and such a one as might, in all probability, bereave her of her kind benefactress—how to evade it, she knew not—to endeavour to convince either Sir Paulet or Miss Musgrove, that this meeting was accidental, appeared no less impracticable than humiliating; she might indeed justify herself to the Bryants; but then the fear of disturbing the harmony which had long subsisted between them and Sir Paulet, rendered that thought abortive. Again, her eye involuntarily turned to the spot on which Grovelby stood—and again it discovered him rooted to the ground—not so the envious Miss Musgrove—she was eagerly pointing out the supposed cause of his reverie.

Hurt at every rising conjecture of what the event of this meeting might be, she entered the house, and finding Mr. and Mrs. Bryant had strolled into the garden, she retired to her own room.

To divert her melancholy, Terentia had taken up the tragedy of *Tancred and Sigismunda*; and while she was sympathizing with those unfortunate lovers, a thundering rap at the door announced the baronet's return, and soon after she heard her benefactress come in from the garden.

To absent herself, would look as if she was conscious of the design, which, she doubted not, would be attributed to her, of attracting the notice of Mr. Grovelby; she therefore

therefore hastened down ; but just as she had descended the stair-case, hearing the baronet stamping with passion, she stopped while that gentleman expressed himself to Mrs. Bryant, with great violence, in the following words :

“ 'Tis just as I conjectured ! I saw how it would be the moment she was introduced ! I must own, cousin Bryant, I take it very unkind—you would have been sorry to have a son of your own so trepanned—for 'tis plain (as Miss Musgrove says) the little syren flung herself in his way—nay, any judicious eye might have observed he sat on thorns, from the time she left the room, till he followed her.”

“ For heaven's sake !” cried Mr. Bryant, “ what do you mean, Sir Paulet, how have I offended you ?”

“ How !” reiterated the baronet, striking his arm a-kembo—“ why, by introducing to my family that specious little gipsy, which your high flown notions of gaining the character of a philanthropist, I suppose, stimulated you to take under your protection—I caught them just now together ; he, simpleton as he is, standing inanimate as the statue at the bottom of your garden, and she, leaning, with all the art of her sex, to observe his motions—and if they tended to the noticing her all aspiring charms ! if you must make your house a caravansera for every needy outcast, who offers itself to view, you should at least let them appear in their true light—but this girl is dressed out like a dutchess ! I wonder not at Miss Musgrove's disliking her—she is fit for nothing in the world but to create envy in her own sex, and to set reason

and passion at variance in the heart of every man who sees her ; in short, I find her presence so incompatible with the peace of my family, that either she, or my son, must instantly leave this house."

I am sorry to see human nature so liable to the baleful passion of envy, said Mrs. Bryant, darting a look of displeasure at Miss Musgrove, (whom, from the latter part of the baronet's speech, she considered as the real cause of all this anger) "but Miss Sackville shall no more offend ! shall no more be insulted ! she shall for a time at least quit this house, which cannot, at present, but be productive of the greatest disquiet to such a mind as her's—*you*, Sir Paulet, have a right to be made easy by those who have experienced your friendship ; but, *here*, turning to Miss Musgrove, I did not expect such arrogance ! nor such premeditated officiousness, to traduce the character of one, whose virtues will render her an object of regard to the *worthy*, though they are too conspicuous for *little minds*, whose optics can no more endure the blaze of perfections which they cannot attain, than they can behold the sun in its full meridian lustre."

"You are very obliging, madam," said the baronet ; "and though I cannot bear she should draw away my son, I should be sorry to injure her in the eyes of so *nice* a distinguisher."

Terentia, from the foregoing discourse, considering her presence would aggravate the baronet's passion, returned to her room, where Mrs. Bryant, in whose heart glowed all the sympathy which the most exalted friendship could

could inspire, soon followed; and after giving her the most solemn assurance of her continued friendship, to prevent her being insulted, proposed her going to a particular friend of her's, sixty miles distant for a few weeks, when she should again meet her with renewed admiration, after being confined to company, she should not but be displeased with, though obligations rendered it necessary that the baronet should be made easy.

Terentia having acceded to this proposal, took an affectionate leave of her benefactress, and employed the rest of the day in preparing for her departure the next morning.

CHAPTER V.

THE sun was just peeping from the purple clouds, and its radiance promised a fine day, when Terentia left her bed, in order to prepare for her journey to Northampton—a solemn sadness had invaded her whole frame; nor had the pearly tear left her downcast eye, when Mrs. Bryant's woman entered with breakfast. I am concerned, she said, Mrs. Ann, to be the means of breaking the friendship between Sir Paulet Grovesby and this hospitable family; but sincerely hope my absence may conciliate the now apparent breach.

Fear not, madam, said the maid, but goodness will meet its reward—we are taught to pray for our enemies—but, for my part, I cannot help sinning in this particular; and though, to be sure, Miss Musgrove has not offended me, and always when she meets me, says, how do you do, Miss Ann, and all that—yet, for the life of me, I can't help despising her and all her ways—she was always as proud as Lucifer, and as ill-natured too; and when my sister lived there, she had liked to have run away with an officer; and now, if the truth was known, she likes Mr. Grovesby—and knowing that she can have no chance, while such an handsome lady as you are near him, has put all her wits together to part you. I know my poor mistress will take on sadly when you are gone—for many a time she told me—says she, Nanny, I never had but one child, and I do not think I had a greater

greater affection for him than I have for *Miss Sackville*.

This was indeed a cordial to the heart of Terentia, to find herself so great a favourite with Mrs. Bryant, and to leave the whole family, of which she knew Mrs. Ann to be the echo, prepossessed in her favour, cheered her beyond expression, and she left the house with tolerable composure. ●

Great part of her journey was without incident, but within a few miles of Northampton, the stage, in passing them, broke down—in it was a young gentleman, whose situation and appearance interested her in his favour. The coachman assured him the coach could not be moved till it was mended. The postilion's countenance conveyed his wishes to assist the distressed gentleman; and the softened heart of Terentia caused her involuntarily to beg his acceptance of a place in her chaise. He gladly complied with her polite requisition, and by his intelligent conversation (though it was tinged with the traits of softest melancholy) she enjoyed a respite to her own disagreeable feelings. It is natural for the soul of sympathy to be a little curious—the fate of an object thus circumstanced, Terentia, by the same involuntary impulse which made him her companion, now enquired if he was going to make any stay at Northampton.

No, madam, he answered, I am only going there on business—if it should not answer my purpose, I shall then make the best of my way to Bath. Terentia, now thinking a farther investigation would be rude, began to talk on the weather; and the gentleman,

whose attention, by the help of a telescope, was fixed on a wild honeysuckle, on which a bee was sipping nectar, exclaimed ! see that insect, madam, how it leaves that beautiful flower in poverty !—yes, it has acted the chemic ; while it extracts the pure essence—the dross is neglected—so it has happened by some of our first authors, whose ideas have furnished mental food for the great, while his powers of invention have been *deadened*, not *quicken*ed by the penurious gripe of pinching poverty ! He then put the telescope in his pocket, and with a blush of confusion, cried, good God ! madam, what entertainment is this—how ready is the mind to run into itself !—“ Indeed, Sir,” said Terentia, “ I am infinitely obliged to you for drawing *mine from itself* ; and am such an admirer of nature, and such an enemy to the oppressive measures which too often attend and depress real merit, that I could hear your definitions on the subject very long, without murmuring at its *prolixity*.”

“ These subjects are too trite, my dear madam, for the fashionable world—though they may admit of much variation, they will not *now* entertain ; and after all, what is the depression of a single individual, when compared to a national calamity ! How happy are we, madam, safely lodged in this land of liberty ; and how gladly would the monarch of France join our party, could he quit the progressive ills which now await him !”

“ But, alas, there is so large a part (he continued) of human life that passes in a state contrary to our inclinations, that one of the principal topics of moral instruction, is the

art of bearing disappointment and calamities ; and as evil is so interwoven in our present existence, it is necessary for every man to furnish his mind with such principles as may enable him to act under it with propriety, decency, and resignation."

" I have always thought, Sir," answered Terentia, " that he who bears patiently, and without murmuring, the *real calamities* of life, is a jewel worthy to be placed in the most polished traits of humanity, though, according to the course of things *here*, they are generally confined to its *darkest shades* !"

" Just as true," said the gentleman ; " but where did so young a mind imbibe those notions ?" " From the best of friends," answered our fair traveller—" but, alas ! I have now lost him."

" The power of sympathy had enforced the inclination of our travellers to wish for an explanation of each other's circumstance ; but urbanity on the side of the gentleman, and delicacy on that of the lady, forbade a farther investigation—so they reached Northampton entirely ignorant of the matter ; and after politely thanking Terentia for her carriage, the gentleman took his leave.

CHAPTER VI.

The arrival of some visitors, with a ball.

MRS. Darford received the friend of Mrs. Bryant with that kind cordiality which always assures a stranger she is welcome.

The whole town was preparing for the races, and Terentia passed the first week very agreeably in visiting the neighbours of her friend; a race was also a species of entertainment entirely new—she looked forward, therefore, to it with a degree of expectation, almost bordering on impatience; and was happy to hear, by a letter which Mrs. Darford received, that their society was going to be enlivened by the arrival of some London friends—yet in the midst of this hurry her mind often strayed to the kindly sunshine of Bryant Hall—and as often traced in idea the shade of her departed friend!

On the first day of the race, in a post-chaise arrived our citizens; but their manners and behaviour served only to disappoint the high-raised expectations of Terentia, who, not knowing their pedigree, supposed them residents of the court end of the metropolis. Mr. Holman was a capital tradesman in the Minories; had saved a pretty income; but, like too many of his predecessors, had retired to his country house, before he had saved a capital large enough to *support it*—so that now his children was grown up, and wanted settling out in the world—he had little to give them,

them, and was obliged to be content with a jaunt to Northampton races once in the year, instead of kicking up a dust every Sunday to his villa on Clapham Common.

Mrs. Darford and Terentia went on the race ground in her own chaise. Mr. Holman, his two daughters, and a nephew, who was intended for the law, figured away in that they came in.

Terentia was much noticed by the gentlemen of the turf, as soon as her party entered the race ground; and just before the last heat was begun, a gentleman of Mrs. Darford's acquaintance put into her hands some tickets for the ball, which was to be given by a noble lord, at the Peacock inn in the evening.

The young ladies were highly delighted with the present, and hurried down their tea, in order to prepare themselves for the felicity which they expected from their evening diversion.

Our heroine no sooner entered the ball, than a buz of admiration issued from the company in general; and, before she had time to seat herself, a very handsome young gentleman, plain, but elegantly dressed, begged the favour of her hand.

The two young ladies, who accompanied her, were also taken out, Miss Holman by the gentleman who presented the tickets, and Miss Patty, by her cousin Fishton, who also resided in London.

When the first dance was over, Mr. Fishton "asked his partner what she thought of a country ball?

"Why it is rather better than I expected—really the company seems quite tolerable,

considering the distance from *town*; I declare I did not expect to see so many genteel people in such a place as Northampton.

"But they are horridly awkward! what a difference between the minuets *here*, and those that are walked at my Lord Mayor's ball—there's life! there's ton! it is some pleasure to see dancing in such perfection—and then to hear the witty things and smart repartees that fall from the nobility, who grace the Mansion House on the ninth of November—Ah! it is ravishing beyond conception!" answered Mr. Fishton.

"Oh, for heaven's sake," cried Miss Patty, "don't mention it—the bare idea of that charming place fills me with extasy! and reflects such honour on genteel life, that really it makes this little *hop* appear totally insignificant."

"Lord, ma'am," answered Mr. Fishton, "do you think to meet with genteel people in Northampton! 'tis very well in a place so countryfied, that you are able to understand their dialect."

The young gentleman, who danced with Terentia, and who had heard the above discourse of the citizene, enquired of his fair partner, if the young ladies were her sisters?

"No, Sir; they are entire strangers to me; I never saw either of them till yesterday; they are the friends of the lady, at whose house I at present reside."

I thought, he replied, I was not mistaken; your whole person bespeaks you of a different rank.

Miss Patty put up her lip, and said to Mr. Fishton, with a sneer, "pray don't you think
to

to despise this little assembly, for there are people here, it seems, who possess the art of physiognomy in so great a degree, as to discover that *we* are deficient in rank ! ha, ha ! I wonder whether we shall see as many stars *here* as graced her ladyship's ball last Easter Monday ; if I am not of rank myself, I must own I love to figure away with those that are ; and if I did not, I fancy our deficiency in that point would not *to-night* cause us to blush at our inferiority.

The word *rank*, though it had by no means ruffled the mind of Terentia, as it had done that of the above mentioned young lady, had been productive of an unpleasing sensation in her breast ; she dreaded being interrogated on a subject, which she herself was a stranger to, having never been acquainted with more of her history, than that she was the daughter of a gentleman, whose name was Sackville, who went to the West Indies to cultivate a plantation which had been left him by a relation ; and that after the first two years he had never been heard of ; from which circumstance, it had been strongly suspected by Mr. Hatfield, that the climate had cost him his life : and she was not sorry, when two gentlemen attracted the attention of her partner, and gave her an opportunity to ask Mrs. Darford, if she did not think it a very splendid ball ?

That lady had just time to answer in the affirmative, when the gentleman returned, and with him the other two, one of whom cried, in accents of surprise,

“ By heavens ! my Lord, you have engaged

gaged a most lovely partner ! I protest she is the finest woman in the room."

" You and I, Sir William" answered the nobleman, in a loud whisper, seldom differ in our opinions with regard to the fair, but have a little mercy on the rest of the ladies ; you have by this unguarded expression, absolutely transformed one half of the smiling goddesses into objects of deformity."

" Really, my Lord, so much perfection transported me, as it were, out of myself—however, I must return to my partner, or her Ladyship will have reason to call my politeness in question."

Miss Patty and Mr. Fish-ton were too much confounded, on the discovery of their inability of judging from appearances, to continue longer in the dance ; they, therefore, sat down in a corner of the room unnoticed, while Terentia felt herself at once surprised, gratified and embarrassed.

The high rank of her partner, though it flattered her vanity, caused her again to look back on those moments, when paternal protection was not denied her—that parent too might still live, or might have died in the possession of those treasures, which she now saw would be necessary appendages to her entrance into the world. A sigh escaped her, as in secret, she uttered a wish that she might be exempted from revealing her humble station, while the nobleman marked with concern her discomposure ; and whether from motives of delicacy, or any other cause, is uncertain ; but he appeared reserved the rest of the evening, nor required her address, when the ball

was

was over, as she supposed he would, in order to enquire after her health the next day.

This nobleman had married, from interested views, the ward of his late father, a rich West India heiress. He had long found the chain of matrimony uneasy; but tenacious of the world's esteem, he had ever been studious to keep up appearances; and he was thought by his acquaintance to be a kind indulgent husband: but the charms of our heroine had awakened him to such a scene of misery, that on his return home, his distant civility was converted into peevishness and unconquerable dislike.

His lady, whose person was far from attracting, had a mind too haughty to condescend to try by the softer graces of her sex, to conciliate those affections, which it was too evident were taking their flight to some more favoured fair one; she had too, by her long residence in the West Indies, been taught to look on the spirit of revenge, rather as a virtue to be cultivated, than a vice to be repelled—it was no wonder, therefore, that with a disposition so unamiable, she now returned, with the highest indignity, the disrespectful behaviour of her Lord; and determined, in her mind, to seek that happiness in separate parties, which in his company appeared to be incompatible.

Mrs. Darford had heard that this nobleman was not happy in his marriage; she had therefore kept a strict eye on him and her fair guest the whole evening, and was not a little alarmed to observe the turn in his Lordship's behaviour, nor sorry when the company broke up;
and

and gave her an opportunity of relating his unfavourable situation to her young friend.

That young lady, sorry to hear that his Lordship was unhappy (though glad to find she was in no danger of any farther interrogation concerning her family) dropped a tear of sympathy, that a couple so young seemed born to drag on a life of discord, instead of enjoying that true felicity, which every one who enters the state, hopes to experience.

While Miss Patty, looking significantly at Fishton, cried, don't be cast down, Miss, if you have a particular penchant for a title; I know Mr. Fishton can introduce you to one at our next Buck's ball. Pray, ma'am, to Mrs. Darford, what is the title of this favoured Adonis?

"Surely," replied Mrs. Darford, "Miss Sackville may be endued with humanity, without being censured for ideas, which I dare say are foreign to her heart."

"Perhaps so," said Miss Patty; "but you have not, my dear ma'am, resolved my question, and I am dying with curiosity."

"He is at present called Lord Landgrave; but he is expected very soon to take up another title, on account of a large fortune being left him on that condition."

"I hope," said Miss Holman to Terentia, "you will treat my wife sister's insinuations with the contempt they deserve; Patty is one of those beings who receives happiness by ridiculing, what *she thinks* the foibles of all others, without once considering the very conspicuous light in which her own appear."

"A piece of French wisdom, if you please,
sister

stiffer gravity," cried Miss Patty, " and every one knows they exceed us in sound policy."

" 'Tis no such thing !" answered Mr. Holman, in a pet, " they succeed in making the English dupes to their foibles ; but as to sound policy, and all that, *where* is it *now* ? The Bastille was their theatre of politics ; and now that is no more, all their political government is sinking to the ground."

Sir, returned Fish-ton, for my part, I think the city of London possesses more sound policy than the whole French kingdom—are we not free agents ? do we not write, say, and do any thing we chuse ? the rights of an English constitution enable us to set the indiscretions of our superiors in their true light with impunity—our print shops are *now* become seminaries of discipline, and scourges to all orders of beings, from the peer to the humble shoe black.

" As to these here print shops," replied Mr. Holman, " I am no advocate for ; I see no manner of use they are of, except to make people spend their time in gaping at what does not belong to them ; our legislature would do well to consider their pernicious effects—the morals of our youth may well be degenerated, when such scenes of immorality are daily presented to their view."

Mrs. Darford observed, " that human nature could as little bear indulgence as it could brook tyranny ; and that the generality of the English might be compared to an over indulged child, whose passions a too lenient parent had suffered to predominate ; that prudence, wisdom, and morality, seemed,

as it were, shrinking under the more prevalent and pernicious propensities of luxury and dissipation.

These here painters are an idle set of vagrants, cried Mr. Holman, and it were better they were employed in some business that would be of use to the community.—Why there is Somerset House! I know a friend of mine, who wishes it at Mount Etna—not a stroke of work can he get done during the time it is open, because, forsooth, his journeyman (and for that reason his apprentice) have taken it into their heads to be fond of the art—and no sooner is his back turned, than down go the hammers; and colours, brushes, and the like, are handled with all that assiduity which ought to be applied to a trunk or a box, or what not—all a parcel of flim flam nonsense, and will in time put a stop to trade in general; our sons will be too refined, forsooth, to tread in the steps of their fathers, and business will be entirely abolished.

“If,” answered Mrs. Darford, “the rise and progress of the fine arts are omens, as many suppose, of declining affluence in a state, England indeed *now* appears to be hastening towards its downfall.”

The clock now striking three, this little party took leave of each other, and retired to their respective apartments to indulge that repose, which the fatigue of the evening rendered necessary; and as the dulness of the foregoing discourse may have inspired our readers with the same propensity, we will here put an end to this chapter.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VII.

A proposal.

TERENTIA now, for near a month, passed her time, without incident, as Mrs. Darford had, for reasons best known to herself paid very few visits during that period; when a letter arrived from Mr. Bryant, indicating that the ill health of his lady rendered the presence of his fair charge necessary.

But lest our readers should suspect Mrs. Darford capable of ill nature, want of politeness or a wish to debar her guest of any amusement the country afforded, we must beg leave to acquaint them, that she had several times observed certain livery servants, lurking about the garden gate, which, according to her ideas, boded no good to the beautiful orphan under her protection; she had therefore desired her assistance in a piece of embroidery; and thus employed, Terentia, who was partial to home, betrayed not the least desire to quit a task in which she could at once display genius, fancy, and judgment.

She found on her return to Bryant Hall, the kind friend of her heart extremely ill; a fever, and as it was feared of the putrid kind, had already rendered her insensible: her anxiety, on this melancholy occasion, could only be equalled by the corroding grief which sat on the features of Mr. Bryant, whose keen sensibility, though opposed by a strength of judgment, which in every other instance supported him, had, in this truly distressing

distressing exigency nearly given way to despair.

Fourteen days had elapsed, and Heaven, in pity to the heart-felt sorrows of this best of men, had diffused the balm of comfort around this now cheerful mansion, by a favourable crisis in Mrs. Bryant's disorder, when the arrival of Sir Paulet Grovelby was again announced.

An involuntary impulse, as he entered, caused Terentia to make an effort to retire; but, to her inexpressible surprise, the baronet with a look of complecancy, desired she would be seated; and kindly taking her hand, told her, "he had something in view for her, which, he hoped, would repay her for the anxiety he had before occasioned her."

Terentia bowed, and in silent wonder resumed her seat; the person of young Grovelby, all attracting as it was, now intruded itself on her mind—yet how to account for a change so unexpected in her favour, she knew not—his own confession too, with regard to interested views, checked the rising sensation of aspiring hope, and left her bewildered in that labyrinth of uncertainty, which racks a sanguine and susceptible mind, even more than the undoubted assurance of disappointment.

The evening passed however without an explanation of this enigmatical business, and the morning came but to involve her into a fresh difficulty, distressing as unexpected! for scarce had she seated herself in the breakfast parlour, when Sir Paulet's gentleman, with

a distant

a distant bow, put into her hand a note—it was from the baronet; and signified his presenting her with five hundred pounds, on condition that she would oblige him in taking the bearer for life, who, he said, was of a good family, and should, on that condition, be further sensible of his favours, as he would instantly put them in any branch of business which they should jointly agree to point out, in order to render their happiness complete.

Astonished, humbled, and affronted, Terentia, without deigning to look at the messenger, who waited for an answer, hastily arose, and flew to Mrs. Bryant to acquaint her with this new indignity—but how was her chagrin increased, to find that worthy woman in tears, and to hear her (for what reason she could not conjecture, though sensible, from her manner, that her heart and speech accorded not) a strenuous advocate for this union.

The power of speech, at this discovery, was denied her; she could only by her tears show the anguish of her mind—while Mrs. Bryant kindly took her hand, and in accents which, on any other occasion would have poured balm into the wound, which both her sensibility and pride had sustained, besought her to be comforted, and endeavour to form her mind to this change, which, she doubted not, would appear in a different light, when investigated with candour, which she was sorry to say, seemed at present foreign to her heart.

“What,” dearest Madam, cried her weeping dependant, have I done, “to be thus abused! and how have I disobliged you, that
thus,

thus, all at once, I am fallen so low in your opinion! when I flattered myself with a share in your esteem—I will add, your affections!”

“You have done nothing, my lovely girl!” (answered Mrs. Bryant) “but your person is too attractive, and your mind by much too elevated for your situation; had Providence been more kind to me, and the best of men, I could and would have given a different judgment—but oh! my much loved Terentia, the little all which was left us from the wreck of that influence we once possessed, is lost! the account of this calamity brought on my late cruel illness—Mr. Bryant and myself must *now* experience the hardships of griping poverty, unless *you*, our only resource, will condescend to redeem us from its horrors—this is in your power to do, as Sir Paulet, who, I guess, has by some means found out that you are far from indifferent to his son, has, on condition we advise, (for we would give our words for no more) promised to befriend us in this our emergency.”

“Oh, Madam! what is it I would not do to recover the lost peace of such benefactors! yet to be wretched for life, is a sacrifice too momentous—let me instantly quit this hospitable mansion, and in some remote corner of the world shade this unhappy person from a request so unreasonable. Sir Paulet will surely be content with my absence, as he may rest assured I have a soul would scorn to seek the presence of a son, whose father holds me in such derision! whatever different ideas that son may have formed of me, and however amiable, generous, and humane, I may account him.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Bryant, as we have before informed our readers, could ill brook controul; she had flattered herself, that the timid and gentle soul of Terentia would be wholly directed by her advice, and was now not a little piqued to find she had, though in an instance where the happiness of her whole life was concerned, spirit enough to be guided by the light of her own reason; hurt too, lest the baronet, thus baffled in his scheme, should withdraw from them his friendship, she felt herself under such a pressure of misfortunes, that scarcely could she help shewing a sourness of temper, which distress, not inclination, had worked up in her mind; she checked, however, its rising progress, and only answered—

“ Ill fated girl! you have then seen too much of Grovesby to be able to save us! we have no dependance on your generosity; the tide of affliction must overwhelm your friends, while an ill placed affection, it is much to be feared, will embitter your days! for Grovesby, however formed to make you happy, *can never be your's*.

The very pointed manner with which Mrs. Bryant had enforced the foregoing answer, particularly the last four words, totally unhinged the small remains of spirits which the event of the morning had left her, and Terentia, in vain, endeavoured to suppress the rising sigh—she had never (till the unexpected kindness of the baronet had taught her to suppose she might) formed even a hope that her growing inclination for Grovesby could (obscure as was her birth and situation) ever meet with a suitable return—but though disappointed

appointed as to the motives which had induced Sir Paulet to change his manner, yet Mrs. Bryant had given it as her opinion, that he actually regarded her with an eye of affection. Difficulties to the human mind serve but to enhance the value of the desired acquisition, and thus it proved with our heroine, who *now* formed a thousand flattering ideas of future felicity; her mind, hurt with the recent shock it had sustained, seemed, as it were, to fly to the person of this amiable youth for that consolation it stood in need of—but then to her sensations he was an utter stranger; and were not that the case, Sir Paulet would never be reconciled to a connection so degrading—the feeble ray of hope, which had a moment before cheered her dejected spirits, was now over-clouded by black despair; and poverty, unprotected poverty, appeared with all its train of ill, to darken the road of life!

With a total depression of spirits, Terentia therefore returned to the breakfast parlour, where she was obliged to officiate, Mrs. Bryant being too ill to leave her room.

Mr. Bryant observed, in silent and pitiable dejection, the change in her countenance; while the baronet assumed his former haughtiness, and with a determined air, in which were painted contempt, heightened by disappointment, he demanded the reason why she *answered* not his note—

The spirited retort she was about to make, died on her lips, when she considered the distress of her best friends, and she calmly answered,

“ I am

"I am extremely hurt, Sir Paulet, that thus, unmerited, I have incurred your displeasure; but as I could send no answer to your note that would not have made me still more culpable in your eyes, I declined sending any."

"What can be your reason," cried the baronet, "for this declaration? Orland is every way your equal; had you not been prepossessed, you could not thus inconsiderately have refused a request, which might have rendered you extremely happy; but with all your pretended humility, I see you have much pride of heart."

"Excuse me, Sir Paulet, if I presume to say my heart is not so sunk by the loss of fortune's favours, as to condescend to a union so wholly repugnant to inclination and propriety; nor am I capable of accepting an offer, which reason, principle, and a due regard to my own happiness, all disapprove"—

"And you, Mr. Bryant, will not teach this rebel to know her own interest—and I am still to be made unhappy, through her means!"

"Alas!" replied Mr. Bryant, "what right have I over this amiable girl? who I am convinced, would do every thing, but rendering herself wretched, to promote our happiness. No! Sir Paulet, sooner, much sooner, would I embrace poverty, though she should assume the most horrid and disgusting aspect, than attempt to force the inclination of one who so justly merits my fatherly protection."

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“Then

“ Then prepare for the *chilling blast* !” cried the baronet, stamping with passion, “ for never by Heaven ”

“ Oh stop ! while it is yet in your power,” cried Terentia, rising from her seat, “ nor for any dislike *to me*, pour this [unmerited] wrath on the head of my kind benefactor—I will this instant leave them—my own hapless state has no terrors, when put, in competition with the dread of being accessory to their ruin.”

“ I cannot part with you thus,” replied Mr. Bryant, kindly taking her hand ; “ self-condemnation, were I to give you up, would shorten a life already embittered by a succession of ill fortune ! sooner will I employ my talents in some way, wherein we can humbly submit together, than make such a sacrifice to ambition and ease.”

CHAPTER VIII.

The Adventure.

OPPRESSED by gratitude, and humbled by tyranny, sinking too under the apprehensions of future evils, Terentia returned to her room, where she staid during the rest of the day ; and employed herself in preparing to leave an asylum, in which she had once promised herself lasting felicity.

To have taken leave of Mrs. Bryant would but have increased the difficulties of that amiable woman, and would also have given room for suspicion in Sir Paulet, that they would in future protect her—she therefore resolved to leave the house in private, as the only means of preserving an able friend, to her now indigent benefactors.

With this resolution she waited till the family were in bed ; and then with only her riding dress, and one change of linen, set forward in her way to the main road.

Her reflections, during a melancholy walk of two hours, were of the most disagreeable kind—now listening with terrors to every rustling wind, and now forming in her mind some hardy ruffian's approach, who might put an end to her existence—tortured by the horrid phantoms of her disturbed imaginations, she was almost tempted to return—but then the hope of approaching day, when she might meet with a chaise, dissuaded her from a design which would renew her perplexities

and increase her difficulties ; resolving therefore to persevere, she implored that Divine Assistance, whose ear is ever open to the voice of distress, ; and, like our first parents, when secluded their terrestrial paradise, with wandering steps, and slow, dejected took her solitary way.

Aurora, that true friend to the bewildered traveller, now broke from her confines, and, in streaks of saffron hue, painted the till now grey horizon, when our heroine was startled by the voice of a man, who seemed enfeebled by sickness ; and thinking it might be in her power to help some object in distress, she listened attentively, and plainly distinguished the following words :

“ Toby,” said he, “ fetch the bag, in which is left some small remains of yesterday’s fragments, which I received, not from the affluent, but from the hand of virtuous industry. No ! my lameness and distress could not affect the heart of arrogant prosperity—it could not soften the callosity which attends luxurious plenty—pride alone governs all their actions, and humanity, that greatest ornament of the human mind, is a stranger to their bosoms !”

By this time our fair traveller had reached the bush, through which she saw a very beautiful boy, not more than seven years old, take from the pocket of a spare coat, the bag, in which was some cold meat.

The invalid looked at it for some time, and then, turning to his pretty companion, pointed to another wallet, and desired he would bring that also, saying, “ that his stomach

stomach was too weak to partake of this food, and that he must have some tea."

The child obeyed ; and the man with the help of a pistol tinderbox, got a light ; after which he made a fire ; and to the no small astonishment of Terentia, who was highly gratified with the novelty of the scene, set forth his tea equipage, while his useful attendant, from a murmuring brook, filled a small tin boiler.

Every thing wore the appearance of cleanliness ; the discourse of the man too seemed far to surpass that of a common beggar ; while curiosity, joined with fatigue, raised something like a desire in the bosom of Terentia, to become his guest, and she accordingly advanced a few steps for that purpose, when the barking of a dog alarmed her, and caused her to retreat.

She had not, however, got many paces, when the man, roused by his faithful domestic, arose, and, seeing her unattended, and at least seven miles from any house, in accents which at once expressed his wonder and compassion, asked, " what had brought her out so early, and if she had met with any misfortune, in which he could assist her."

She answered, " if he would treat her with a cup of tea, she should think herself much obliged to him, having travelled all night, and being now quite weary with thirst and fatigue."

" Is it possible !" cried the man, with looks of astonishment, " that a form so lovely, and in which appears the dignity of high birth, though blended with the softer graces

of affability, can thus condescend to partake of such beverage as this !”

“ Indeed,” answered Terentia, “ not a little pleased with her new acquaintance, who appeared to be near his grand climacteric, I was never more disposed to make an hearty meal.”

“ God be praised !” said this tenant of an aged oak, “ I have a morsel untouched ; but, alas ! the necessary addition to qualify it to your palate, is far from good—the kind hand from which I received it, was too poor to purchase any but the worst.”

“ I will not take your word,” replied Terentia, “ *you* can eat it, and what am I better than my fellow creature ? *you* have but tasted that poverty, which nothing but the kindest interposition of Providence can now save me from experiencing !”

“ The tear of sympathy now trickled down the cheek of our philanthropist. While with uplifted hands, he exclaimed, Gracious God ! how intricate are thy ways ! why, oh Heaven ! is this fair flower, whose opening bloom promises so perfect a maturity, thus checked in the career of life, while the hard heart, the arrogant, and unthinking, enjoy, without ceasing, and too generally, without one pitying sigh to the unfortunate, all the luxuries of life !”

“ Adversity,” answered Terentia, “ however painful and unpleasant in itself, is often a choice, and much to be valued friend ! it excites those reflections, which reform the unthinking mind—it sets the mutability of all the high raised expectations of aspiring humanity

humanity in its full view, and teaches us to soar above the groveling—for such are even the highest gratifications of this lower world, to those brighter prospects which alone can bring solid happiness.”

Within a few yards lay the main road to London, and a post chaise now appearing, which, by the blinds being up, seemed to be a return one in its way to town, Terentia begged the little boy to stop it—he did so; and our heroine, after putting into the hand of her new acquaintance, not what her expanded heart would in different circumstances have dictated, but what her humbled situation and impoverished finances *now* allowed of, for his kind hospitality, was about to take her leave, when, with a solemn, yet sympathizing countenance, he prevented her intention, by thus addressing her:—

“Peace light on thy head! may the lamp of an unfeared conscience give thee light in thy darkest prospects! may that Being who rules the orbs, guide thee with the clue of rectitude through this labyrinth of false attractions; and may thy virtues, whether dignified with wealth, or oppressed by poverty, be such as will, after the dark curtain of death has enveloped thee from the eye of humanity, reward thee with unfading felicity.”

Struck with the solemn, yet generous wish of a stranger, where manners and situation so little accorded, Terentia could only answer by a pearl of grateful sensibility, which stood trembling in her eye; and as the chaise drove off, she was more than once tempted to re-

turn, and learn the particulars of a life, which she was certain must, ere it had reached this period of wretchedness, have been marked with many singular events.

The rest of the journey was without incident; and at nine in the evening she found herself in this great and opulent city, without so much as the knowledge of one friend, who could direct her in what manner to apply for a situation in which she could support herself.

Her figure was too striking to pass unnoticed by the company, which were differently engaged in and about the inn, while the dejection, which was visible in her countenance, created sympathy and curiosity in the bosom of its mistress, a middle aged woman, of pleasing manners and insinuating address; but as she was too civil to gratify the latter propensity, by questions which might appear impertinent, she judged it more polite to leave it in suspense, till Betty, the chambermaid, had sifted (as was her custom on particular occasions) the post boy as to the place of her residence, and other particulars, preparatory to the proposed investigation; she therefore, after putting her fair guest into an handsome apartment, and making enquiry of what she chose for supper, left her to her own reflections, and was making a report of her good nature and sweetness of manners, when Betty and the post boy entered the kitchen.

“La, ma’am!” cried Betty, with a face expressive of much intelligence, “how people
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ple may be mistaken by appearances—I declare, now, I thought as how the young lady above had com'd from some very great family and do you know Mr. Thomas, here, says, that he picked her up under a hedge just after sun rise, in company with an old beggar man!"

"Ay, ay," cried the landlord, who was at once jealous for the honour of his house, his wife, and his own sagacity, "I mistrusted as much; but this comes of your pretending to have a greater knowledge of the world than myself—had I been consulted, this mistake had never been committed; now, I suppose, if any good company comes in, our best room is occupied by some idle baggage of easy virtue, because, forsooth, you have taken it into your head to think her figure commands respect, and that she can be nothing less than a person of family and fortune."

"My dear," answered Mrs. Fairbill, "you will allow I seldom err in judgment; and, I dare say, by her appearance, notwithstanding this odd account, that she is indeed a person of rank in distress; every turn in her manner convinces me I am right in my conjecture, therefore do suffer me to use my own discretion, nor by your over hastiness wound a sensibility, which seems already to have received a stab to its peace."

"Well, well," cried the host, "if you should for once be right in your conjecture, suppose we advertise her; for if of family, she is certainly either some run-away wife, or disobedient daughter, or she would never travel unattended."

"It would be cruel to expose her to bad treatment," said the wife, "for whatever cause she has for uncaresness, I cannot believe she is faulty."

"It would be ridiculous to miss so good an opportunity of an handsome reward," answered the husband.

"But we are not certain as to her situation, and till then"—

"O," interrupted the post boy, "as to that, I don't think master is at all out of his notions; for all the way we came, she looked just ready to cry—and father always used to say, as how, women never shed tears, but when they met with disappointments; but I hope, you'll let me go snacks, Sir, because, for why, you would not have known nothing of the matter, if so be I had not told you all about it."

This speech was entirely lost by our host, who was one of those sanguine mortals, whose actions gallop, unreined by reason or propriety, and therefore every idea giving way to that of avarice, and all reflections of a disappointment, or any injury which his fair guest might sustain from this very sagacious scheme, being enveloped in the above propensity, he in his usual hasty manner, snatched up a pen, and having, as he thought, hit on something out of the common way, in order that it might strike the eye of all who read the paper, was beginning a paragraph, when, oh death to his rapid imagination! a post coach and four entered the yard, and caused this aspiring genius to dismount his Pegasus, though not
without

without grumbling at the loss of a thought, which, in his opinion, was the best that ever graced a newspaper, to attend the company it contained.

CHAPTER IX.

In which our heroine finds a new friend and an old acquaintance.

THE company, for which our host had been interrupted, was no other than a lady of quality and her servant, who had stopped in her journey to Bath, on account of a favourite horse having had a fall, and who was at this instant expressing her resentment, at being shown into so paltry a dungeon as the room appointed for her.

Mrs. Fairbill apologized for not having it in her power to accommodate her ladyship in a better manner, alleging, "that the house was quite full, and that a young lady of quality had just taken the only front room which was unoccupied, but that, as every thing in this was equally good and clean, she hoped her ladyship would put up with it for once, as it was entirely out of her power to offer her a better."

Terentia, who had heard Mrs. Fairbill's apology, now opened the door of her room, and begged to make an exchange with the lady; "adding, that all rooms were equally indifferent to her; and that the pleasure of obliging her ladyship, would greatly overbalance the entertainment she had found in looking into the street."

The lady seemed struck with the person and manner of our heroine, though she could not, as she said, think of taking such a liberty.

liberty. Terentia, however, insisted on giving up the room; and the lady, after some farther apologies, agreed to accept her generous offer, on condition she would favour her with her company the rest of the evening, "saying she was quite stupid with being shut up so long with that odious creature," meaning her maid.

There was something of a haughtiness in this lady, that by no means accorded with the idea which Terentia had ever formed of true greatness of mind; yet the lady seemed pleased with her—and she, young and inexperienced, *now* wanted a protector; something like a gleam of hope, on a proposal so congenial to her own wishes, beamed over her anxious mind, and she secretly determined, if she found no new cause to deter her, to acquaint her ladyship with the difficulties she at present laboured under, and to beg her advice with regard to her future conduct.

They had chatted on general subjects for some time, when Mrs. Fairbill, attended by a servant entered with supper.

"Oh!" cried the lady, "you are extremely civil to attend yourself—if all people in your way were to behave as decently, one need not dread, as I always do, entering an inn; but you are quite, I see, out of the common way, and I dare say have good connections—I wish you could recommend me to some genteel young gir to be about my person—I don't mean as a servant, but one that is capable of entertaining me in my retired moments—I am much alone; such a person would therefore be a real acquisition; and I think I could depend

depend on your judgment; do you know I have a great opinion of first impressions?

"Your ladyship does me much honour," answered Mrs. Fairbill; "but I know not at present of any one who has abilities for such a situation, though doubtless there are many deserving objects in distress, who would be happy to be so situated; suppose your ladyship was to advertise."

That was what I was thinking of (she answered) while Terentia was only stopped by a something like false shame, so often the concomitant of fallen prosperity, from immediately exposing her own poverty, and claiming that protection which now seemed to be so providentially thrown in her way.

Her good sense and natural humility soon, however, overcame scruples, which, though at the time they seemed insupportable, were only momentary; and when again alone with the lady, she frankly owned her dependant state, and ardent desire to be taken under her protection.

"My dear girl," said the lady, in answer to this application, "I was never in my life more agreeably surprised; and though I am extremely sorry for the cause of this request, yet I am selfish enough to hope that no unforeseen accident may bereave me of your society; I am naturally haughty, but meekness with me ever found a friend—I have many gloomy hours—indeed I am far from happy; and if as I trust you will solace me by your kind attention in those moments of weakness, I, not *you*, shall be the party obliged."

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The lady did not express herself without agitation; a tear, unchecked, frayed down her cheek; and Terentia, whose mind was always ready to catch the soft enthusiasm of tender sensibility, gave a proof by its officious fellow, that she was truly capable of the task required.

Thus mutually satisfied with each other, they sat up till very late, and parted with regret; and to the no small disappointment of Mr. Fairbill, who had racked his brain all the preceding evening for a proper composition (not caring to have a partner in the expected emolument) and had actually paid an extra price for its immediate insertion, they left at the hour of nine the metropolis, and proceeded in their journey to Bath.

I am going, said her ladyship, as she seated herself in her carriage, to visit an old friend of my father's, whom I have not seen since my marriage. Quite an odd creature, I assure you; I suppose he'll endeavour to persuade us, that we by no means vie with the young ladies of his time—he has, you are to know, an amazing penchant for every thing in the antediluvian file; and was my life as happy as it has been, I would not have paid this visit; but as it is, I flatter myself I cannot suffer by the change, however distant from my taste—but as I have got you, I believe I shall shorten my stay there, and return to town, as the winter will be advancing.

It was late in the evening, when they arrived at their journey's end; and Terentia was not a little surprised to hear Lady Ashton welcomed by a voice, which seemed familiar to her ear, nor less so, when she recognized in
that

that lady's friend, an old gentleman whom she had once met before at a friend of Mr. Hatfield's.

Mr. Burdet too instantly recollected her, and very politely said,

"On my word, young lady, your company rejoices me exceedingly: you are indeed a sweet girl, a fair flower—the foul soil of modern luxury hath not yet tarnished thy natural bloom; you appear as one transplanted from the golden age, in order to put the art and folly of the present, to the blush."

"Pray now," said lady Ashton, "take another dive into antiquity for a parallel compliment; or depend on it I shall be prodigiously affronted."

"I shall pay you no compliment my dear," he answered, "when I say you have set an excellent example to the flirts of this age, in choosing for your companion a person, who, in spite of her outward attractions, is not above showing herself amiable, humble, and discreet."

"I hope, my dear Sir, you begin to have a better opinion of us moderns than you used to have; I really never saw you so condescending before," answered her ladyship.

"Let the present age," cried he, "give me *no reason*; and I promise you I shall not search antiquity for models of perfection. It is not so much the *times*, as the minds of the people that differ so widely; one would think the whole atmosphere had undergone a change, and that a canine madness had taken possession of three parts out of four of this habitable globe"—

"And therein consists, I presume, all the changes since the flood," whispered her ladyship

ladyship to Terentia, as the servant entered with supper.

The old gentleman's attention was too deeply engaged on the dessert, which was now placed in the middle of the table, to notice the foregoing remark, and he began lamenting, "that the grapes were nothing near as large as formerly; that his peaches and nectarines were good for nothing, since he had himself been unable to manage them, and that he had no gardener since old Isaac (who was born in the same year with himself) that understood any thing at all of the matter.

Supper being ended, the ladies were about to retire, when Mr. Burdet enquired why Lord Ashton did not accompany his lady?

Her ladyship then lamented her miserable situation, and added, "that the carelessness of his lordship had of late been quite insufferable."

"I wonder at nothing," said Mr. Burdet, "in an age licentious as this—it was not a match of my constructing; but you thought a coronet would repay the want of affection, morality, and in short, every requisite qualification for domestic felicity; and so, trusting to your own sagacity, without consulting any of your real friends, you became at the instigation of a mercenary guardian, and for any thing I know to the contrary, against the inclination of his son, the countess of Ashton; and in lieu of your liberty and forty thousand pounds, you may now, like many of our modern wives, who build their hopes of felicity on as sandy a foundation, fly abroad for that peace—which I fear will ever be denied you at home."

"You

" You have drawn the portrait in colours too striking for my peace (answered her ladyship) but I am determined to return his neglect with all the contempt it deserves."

" Then," said Mr. Burdet, " you will together make ample food for the tongue of calumny—is his folly really *pleasing*, that you wish to imitate it?"

" No! but there is a pleasure in retaliating injuries like mine—and as no other gratification is now left me, I am determined to pursue revenge."

" Then you will pursue a vulture, that will tear thy inward peace—nor leave thee one solid rock of hope to rest on."

" The baseless fabric of delusive hope," replied Lady Ashton, " has long been dissolved, and I will no longer court his treacherous and unstable anchor.—But come, my dear Terentia, I shall make you as grave as I am revengeful; we will now retire, and call some other subject; or, at least drop one which must have given you cause to think me an odd and resolute creature; but whatever troubles I am bound to endure, I hope you will never have cause to think me unsteady in my friendship to you, who deserve much more felicity than seems interwoven with the web of human life."

CHAPTER X.

The present, with some account of a fashionable pair.

TERENTIA being, by the kind interposition of Providence, comfortably situated, took the earliest opportunity to acquaint her friends at Bryant Hall with her good fortune, requesting their joint forgiveness for her manner of leaving them, and begging the favour of her clothes on the first opportunity, as lady Ashton had declared her intention to stay at home till her friend was properly equipped to attend her to the rooms.

An early day gladdened her heart with the kind assurance of their continued friendship, together with her clothes, and a ten pound note—but what most heightened the acquisition was, the resemblance of young Grovelby wrapt in a note containing these words :

“Dark and intricate as my behaviour must appear, and greatly (who adoring, yet forbearing from motives of dire necessity to confess my passion) as I suffer from the cruelty of my situation, will you forgive and keep from Mrs. Bryant the artifice I have used in sending, unknown to her, this small remembrance of one, who, in defiance of the darkest fate, must ever remain your unalterable friend.”

Had not Grovelby, to whom the heart of Terentia had long been partial, avoided so carefully as he did the epithet love, and in its stead only sued for her friendship, little consideration would have been wanted to have
returned

returned a present so clandestinely received; but to deny herself the sweet solace of friendship, so disinterested as his appeared, was a trial very unequal to those feelings which now inhabited her breast.

“ Yes,” cried she, as she viewed the too amiable features, “ as a friend, I may without a blush contemplate—may wish you every happiness—and when the unfortunate Terentia—” what further she was about to express is uncertain, as Lady Ashton came to inform her she must accompany her to the ball room in the evening.

In her confusion, she had left the portrait on the table—which her ladyship seeing, took up; and after admiring both the face and the drapery, vowed she would borrow it to be revenged on her lord. It is so amazing handsome,” she added, “ he will be on the rack when he supposes he has so formidable a rival.”

Whatever racks her ladyship was preparing for his lordship, she had by taking the portrait of her friend, planted a dagger in the breast of Terentia; such a piece of levity might be productive of very ill consequences; she saw in idea a black train of events issuing from it, and with much earnestness besought her to return it.

“ To this her ladyship was about to answer, when Lord Ashton made his appearance, and added to the already perturbed mind of Terentia, as she viewed in his person the very identical Lord Landgrave who had been her partner at Northampton.

His Lordship, after his first salutation to his Lady, turned carelessly to Terentia, and demanded.

demanded where she had picked up so handsome a companion—and added, he “ Mr. Burdet just now informed me, she is as good as she is handsome.”

“ At London,” added her ladyship carelessly.

“ May I have the honour of knowing your engagement this evening?” said Lord Ashton.

“ I am going to the ball;” said her ladyship fullenly.

“ Would you wish me to attend you thither?” answered his Lordship.

“ That’s as you please; Miss Sackville will attend me, so I shall not be alone.”

“ That is to say, my company will be dispensed with—had I thought myself of so little consequence, I would not have taken the trouble to come to Bath, I assure you.”

“ You doubtless consulted, as usual, your own pleasure in leaving Landgrave Castle,” my lord;” answered my lady, with a provoking smile: “ for heaven’s sake, if you are displeased with your journey, do leave us, and return to it again.”

“ By no means,” cried his lordship, with a smile equally sarcastic, “ you are sensible I would not wish the world to think me so very fashionable a husband as to be despised by my own wife—but you seem so bent upon pulling off the veil, that I am fearful I also shall be obliged to go unmasked; and if so, I shall, in all probability, seek that satisfaction elsewhere, which your unaccountable aversion denies me.”

His lordship staid not for an answer, and
with

with much seeming displeasure left the room; while her ladyship expatiated on the hardness of her fate, and with tears of rage and disappointment, besought Terentia to forgive her intention to make use of the picture, by way of retaliating this obvious deception in laying to her charge the breach of that conjugal affection which he himself had long discarded from his breast.

Fretted, mortified, and provoked, lady Ashton entered the ball-room, with an intention (as she said) to play the coquet with the first gentleman who should think her an object of attention, in order to banish that chagrin from her bosom which the neglect of her lord had planted, and to gratify that pride, which more or less is the inhabitant of every human heart.

To the despicable propensity of coquetry, Terentia had ever been a stranger; and to hear her ladyship thus express herself, hurt her much.—Gladly would she have expatiated on its destructive tendency; but the fear of offending check'd the friendly wish; and all that she dared do, was to pity in silence the weakness of her who could for a moment suppose that, by quitting the reins of rectitude, and taking those of dissipation, she could either conciliate the affections of her lord, or restore her own tranquillity.

Her ladyship, while actuated by this spirit of braving, as she thought, her ill usage, was accosted by a Mr. Standly, who was to all intents and purposes a man of intrigue—and she now, for the first time, suffered herself to be drawn into that vortex of female destruction, which hurries thousands of its
fair

fair votaries in the abyfs of calumny, and which cannot fail fooner or later to involve all thofe ill-fated females who do not avoid it, in that moft corrodng of all evils—felf reproach.

Lady Afhton, from the time of meeting Mr. Standly, had entirely deserted her young friend, and ſhe had fat ſometime much perplexed and difconcerted at the notice her ladyſhip's unaccountable behaviour had attracted; when ſhe was relieved, in ſome meaſure, from her aukward ſituation by the approach of the ſame gentleman in whoſe favour ſhe had been prepoſſeſſed in her way to Northampton.

This gentleman, whoſe name was Conyers, was the younger ſon of a noble family, who by a liberality of ſpirit, unchecked by prudence, had got rid of a very affluent fortune, and left him at the age of twenty-four endued with keen ſenſibility, a generous heart, and an underſtanding formed to ſhine in the elevated rank he was born to, unable, from the narrowneſs of his income, to gratify any of his wiſhes, except that of enlightening his underſtanding by reading the beſt authors, and dedicating much of his time to the Muſes; his converſation was at once elevated, intereſting, and inſtructing; and Terentia felt no pleaſure in being obliged, in compliance with lady Afhton's deſire, to join the dance with a ſop, who came with, and was the friend of Mr. Standly.

Thus engaged, ſhe was far from being ſorry when the company began to diſperſe, and lady Afhton's chairs were called—juſt as ſhe was entering her's, Mr. Conyers again appeared,

peared, and, with a respectful bow, begged she would permit him to enquire after her welfare the next day; to this she assented, and at half past two in the morning she arrived at Mr. Burdet's, and was not a little alarmed to see, as she entered the parlour, Lord Ashton sitting pensively alone with Thomson's Seasons in his hand.

His lordship arose, and in an extacy which he could not hide, said, "this is lucky, indeed! Oh, Miss Sackville! did you know the anxious moments I have passed since I last had the honour of seeing you, surely you would not look displeased, that thus opportunely I can, without the fear of the world's censure, unbosom a heart which has lost all pleasure but what arises from contemplating the image of her, who has never for a moment since that happy evening that blessed me with her hand, been absent from my view."

"Language such as this, my lord," said Terentia, indignantly rising, "requires no answer—you will excuse my leaving you—I will wait in the house-keeper's room till her ladyship's return."

"You must not leave me in anger," cried his lordship, "say but you forgive me, and I will endeavour to be content with your friendship."

"You have, my lord, forfeited all claim to that sacred name—by thus insulting me; and I insist on leaving you, and that instantly."

"By heavens!" said his lordship, "I will never more offend you—say but you forgive me, and from this moment you shall find I
will

will behave myself in a manner suitable to the delicacy of a character so truly amiable. —I revere your virtue too much to wish to tarnish it even in your own eyes for the world; had you suffered me to succeed, such would have been my precaution, that the voice of calumny should have had no food for its malignancy, but I have done (observing Terentia again attempting to rise) and will never, on condition you forgive me *now*, wound your ears with more than the strictest virtue will admit.

“ You have on that condition, my pardon, my lord; but surely you are wrong in thus neglecting lady Ashton; why would you not go to the ball?”

“ Lady Ashton has rendered me completely miserable—her ungovernable passion for me excited my pity, and I married her in hopes of being tolerably happy, as I never had, at that time, seen a woman I could prefer; but oh, to what have I reduced myself by this ill-judged union—her affection was too violent to be permanent—and she now, by a disposition despicable as the fiend of darkness can make it, *deserves*, and is in the possession of my utmost contempt—she has long defied me; and I trust, will not now, or ever, regret my absence. No! novelty is a pleasing ingredient in the mixture of human life, and, perhaps, an instance of it, to which I have this night been a witness, will befriend me more than her ladyship is aware of.”

He spoke this with so determined an air, that it was evident he had watched, and meant to make a handle of her ladyship's unguarded conduct.

E

A thundering

A thundering rap at the door now announced the return of lady Ashton; and Terentia, trembling for the happiness of her friend, ran to meet her, resolving, at all events, to hazard her displeasure, rather than desist from giving her that advice which her critical situation required—but if she was terrified to perceive that her ladyship was likely to become the dupe of her own folly, she was not less surprised to hear his lordship, with all the seeming tenderness of a faithful and affectionate husband, approach her, and say,

“ I have been extremely unhappy, lady Ashton, at your long stay; and was just going to send my own servant out in search of you, fearing you had met with some accident.”

Her ladyship was visibly confused; a kind of conscious terror seemed to stifle the rising passion which would otherwise have been expressed, and she only answered:

“ Inexplicability like your’s, my lord, is not to be fathomed; but whatever are your views in this duplicity of manners, I will not be debarred from that pleasure which the innocent amusements of life afford me.”

“ Oh! by no means! but is it not strange,” said his lordship with a provoking sneer, “ that all my passive obedience to your every command, cannot procure me one smile of approbation—but so your ladyship is happy, I must submit—Am I entitled to know if you have spent an *agreeable* evening?”

“ So infinitely happy have I been,” she answered, “ that had I known I should have met such a very *cordial* reception, I believe I should have lengthened that pleasing felicity,
which

which I own I left with regret ; and now, my dear, affectionate, passive lord Ashton, do you chuse to retire, or are we to have a further specimen of your skill in deception ?”

“ I am happy, however,” said his lordship, with some asperity, “ that *you*, lady Ashton, are *defective* in that *art*, though perhaps, the character of your sex would have been much better supported, at least more naturally, had you for once disguised your sentiments—Intrepidity in a cause which ought to raise the blush of modesty, is by no means, in my opinion, a feminine perfection ; and though fashion may have rendered it prevalent, yet, to the modest ear, it will always lay open the defects of the mind.”

Her ladyship not chusing to understand this very pointed sarcasm, after recommending him to re-peruse the book he had just laid down, rather than continue to moralize, as she termed it, on her conduct ; rang for her woman, and retired.

CHAPTER XI.

*In which Mr. Burdet finds a new acquaintance,
which occasions a trip to the bookseller's.*

THE next morning lady Ashton, having ordered breakfast in her own room, Terentia took her's with the gentlemen—and before they had finished, Mr. Conyers was announced.

Mr. Burdet looked significantly at his lordship, and observed, “that though many things had undergone a transmutation since his remembrance, the person of a fine woman had just the same tendency to ensnare mankind as ever—but when,” added he, turning to Terentia with a gracious smile, “I speak of ensnaring, remember, I mean an exception to such a character as your's, who cannot but prove an honour to the choice of any man.”

“Exactly my opinion,” cried his lordship, “but form no acquaintance, Miss Sackville, without caution; deception, you will find, is more or less every man's characteristic; it is natural to disguise those imperfections which we are conscious must displease the object we would wish to obtain; and who is equal to virtue such as your's? Therefore for heaven's sake be cautious of those you honour with your friendship. What do you know of the character of your present visitor?”

“Not much, I own,” answered Terentia, blushing, “but enough, I believe to convince
me

me he is no despicable character ; that he is unfortunate, I have not a doubt, but to find him unamiable, would very much surprise me.—I thank your lordship, however, for the friendly hint, and sincerely believe, it is a doctrine worthy my attention, at least if I may give credit to my own sagacity, which has within the last few months of my existence given me reason to suspect even the most specious appearances.”

A glow of conscious guilt reddened the cheek of lord Ashton as Conyers entered.—Mr. Burdet begged he would partake of some breakfast ; and before he had taken his second cup, the old gentleman discovered him to be the grandson of an old and valuable friend, on whose amiable qualities he expatiated for more than a quarter of an hour, and then, to the utter confusion of his guest, he changed the topic, and began a dissertation on the luxury of his father, who, he said, “with all the spirit of modern dissipation, had squandered away the finest estate in England.” He then told Conyers he was the model of his old friend, and gave him a general invitation to his house.

The young gentleman thanked him for his partial notice, and replied,

That the time he staid in Bath he should dedicate to his friends, among which he should be proud to rank a person who had thus distinguished him ; at the same time presenting him a manuscript which he had lately written, and with which he had been to Northampton in order to dispose of.

"Alas !" said Mr. Burdet, "then my fears are not groundless ; and you severely feel the folly of your late father."

"My father, Sir, had many virtues, though a liberality of spirit, unaided sometimes by prudence, made the evening of *his* life unpleasant—and the morning of *mine* rather cloudy.—But, who, Sir, is perfect ?—Shades even in the brightest characters are always to be found—and he whose sun is clear from the specks of frailty—to whom may he attribute the cause ?—I do not repine, nor would I doubt but that the difficulties I have encountered are allotted me for an end more essential to my real good, than a more favourable voyage through life might have produced."

"You are, indeed, endowed with the same spirit of philosophy as your grandfather," answered Mr. Burdet, as he dashed away the effusions of a heart unmoved by the remembrance of his fellow-student—"those sentiments are his ; just so would he in your case have answered. But why carry your manuscript to Northampton ? surely the metropolis of England would have been more preferable, and much more likely to produce you a good harvest for your labours, than that of a single county."

"It was not till I had tried many of the bookfellers in town, that I condescended to offer it to one of the fraternity in the country."

"What were their objections ? was it a party affair ? I remember in my time a gentleman published a pamphlet in opposition to government, and the devil a one could he
fells,

fell, till he answered it himself: then it took prodigiously, and ran through three or four editions."

"By no means, Sir; I never trouble my head with politicks, it is a composition in verse, on the beauties of Nature, and the justness of Providence."

"In my young days such a production would have done you honour—but this is not an age for piety and morality to go down: I dare say the eye of fashion would just as soon look into a sermon, as a description of what they so much despise; and as to Providence, they think nothing about it;—however, we will try what my little friend H—— will say to it."

"You are very obliging, Sir," said Conyers, sighing, "but an author who has nothing but a series of misfortunes to recommend him, has little chance of gaining so much as a perusal, much more of being deemed worthy a purchase. Interest, Sir, the wonder working talisman interest, is the only safe anchor for the mind of an author to rest on; every rising hope, unless supported by that, sinks like the sun beneath the grey horizon, when the grey clouds shut it from our sight."

Mr. Burdet expatiated much on the injustice of the times, and said every assistance in his power should be at his service. Lord Ashton joined in this generous offer, and added, when his Lady came down they would take a walk to the bookseller's.

When Terentia went to enquire after her Ladyship's health, she found her up and dressed as for the day; and when she men-

tioned the walk, and that the gentlemen meant to assist Conyers, she appeared gratified at their friendly intention, but declined going herself.

With much confusion, and no small degree of terror, lest she should offend, Terentia began an opening to the task she had imposed on herself, by begging her ladyship to restore to her the picture of her friend: but if her terror was great, her vexation was not less, when in a tone very peremptory, her Ladyship told her, "That if she insisted on the portrait, she might have it, but that she should (on such a piece of ill-judged impertinence) withdraw her protection, and place it on some one who would shew themselves sensible of her friendship."

"On your own account, Lady Ashton, it is that I wish to dissuade you from irritating your Lord; I admit he is greatly in fault; but suffer not his behaviour to involve you in the tortures of remorse. Let me intreat your Ladyship to make no use of the portrait—if outward happiness is denied you, Oh! for heaven's sake part not with what is much more desirable—your inward peace! nor give the tongue of calumny a licence to blame the conduct of her who has it not in her power to alledge either a want of sensibility or prudence on any other occasion."

Lady Ashton seemed moved at this advice of Terentia's, which wanted not the power of energy to enforce it, and after a pause she answered,

"Pardon me, Miss Sackville, I am sure you mean me well, though you can form no idea of the poignancy of that torment which

is occasioned by the neglect of those we love ; but after I have gratified myself this once, I will endeavour to convince you that you have not pleaded the cause of prudence in vain."

Terentia then left her ladyship, and attended the gentlemen to the bookseller's.

Mr. Burdet, when he entered the shop, informed Mr. H—— of his desire to serve his friend, desiring he would lay aside self-interest, and inform him how to proceed.

Mr. H—— desired to peruse a few pages, after which he very ingenuously pronounced the whole to be a very good performance ; and said, " That if a preface (in which there must be a little fine reasoning, a few excuses for temerity, and a large share of panegyric on those to whom the power of deciding its fate would fall) was written, he doubted not but it would sell. "

Mr. Conyers, not much gratified by this decision, which in his opinion was far from favourable, disdaining the idea of courting praise by means so digressive from the high notions of rectitude with which he was possessed, was about involuntarily, to replace the manuscript in his pocket, when Mr. Burdet declared his intention of raising a subscription, not doubting, as he said, but the work would *speak* for itself.

" Why to be sure," cried the bookseller, who by this time perceived he had committed an error in judgment, " That is the most eligible way of going to work—decorate but the first four pages with the names of *great patrons*, and I'll answer for its success : as to its being a refined piece of business, why so much the better : I never yet knew but the

little world preferred in general those writers, however unintelligible from their sublimity of thought, which are patronized by the *great*—they are fond of displaying that taste which erring pride inspires them with the supposition that they possess, and refinement is now so much the rage, that it is no uncommon thing to hear a mechanic expatiating on the beauties of Homer, or a chambermaid displaying her sentiments on the representation of Handel; and so, Sir (turning to Mr. Conyers) “by this mode of proceeding you will, doubtless, have your performance run through many editions.”

“Very true, very true,” cried Mr. Burdet, “a general change in nature! for my part I should not be surprised to see the river Thames turned into a volcano, or that on the commencement of another war, our maritime powers should have intirely forgot any exercise but that of handling the fiddle.”

Preliminaries being thus settled for this publication, our party returned, and scarcely had Terentia ascended the staircase, when she perceived Mr. Standly hurrying along the passage, and saw him enter a room, the door of which opened into an unfrequented lane.

Unwilling to let her ladyship know that she had been witness to a visit so clandestinely paid, she returned to the parlour, when the first object that presented itself to her view was Mr. Conyers, reading a letter which his servant had just brought him, and which, on her entrance, he slid into his pocket.

“I beg, Sir, I may not interrupt you; I
have

have business with Lady Ashton," said Terentia, and was going up stairs.

"Impossible! you can never interrupt," he answered, darting upon her his penetrating eyes; "and yet such is your ascendancy over mankind, that you seem born, without knowing your power, to embitter the life of all who behold you.—But what am I saying? is this friendship? I must leave you, madam; I find I have accepted an office, the performance of which I am unequal to."

He then left the room, leaving Terentia wholly at a loss to account for his unintelligible harangue.

CHAPTER XII.

A concert, and a friend in need.

A WEEK more had elapsed, during which the mornings were spent in airings, shopping, and dressing; and the evenings in different parties of pleasure, where they seldom missed the attendance of Conyers; a circumstance by no means displeasing to Terentia, as the new mode of behaviour which Lady Ashton had adopted, gave her Lord too many opportunities of endeavouring, under the mask of friendship, to ingratiate himself into her favour, and from which by this means she was able either wholly to disengage herself, or by making Mr. Conyers a party in the discourse, prevent any particular attention being paid her from that nobleman.—When a letter reached her from Mrs. Bryant, intimating that a hope had once more illumined her mind, that she should soon have it in her power to reinstate her in her former residence, as a treaty of marriage was on foot, and it was supposed would soon take place, between Grovesby and Lady Belinda Sheffield; and that Sir Paulet had signified to Mr. Bryant that as soon as those nuptials were actually celebrated, he would not only consent to her being recalled, but most cordially join in any acts of friendship to their justly esteemed favourite.

This intelligence was at once pleasing, distressing, and mortifying; the thoughts of
again

again enjoying the satisfaction of Mrs. Bryant's company highly gratified her; she saw, and saw with the deepest anxiety, that Lady Ashton was in the way to render her own character suspicious, and she was equally certain that, in that case, her protection would by no means continue an eligible one for a young person who had nothing but her virtue to steer her through the fluctuating waves of life; yet the condition on which Mrs. Bryant was to receive her, was by no means an easy one; it required more fortitude, resignation, and indifference than Terentia was at that moment possessed of; and as the sensations of pride and revenge were strangers to her breast, her only refuge was in shedding a copious shower of sorrow's silent stream, after which reason resumed its sway, and serenity, if not felicity, again took possession of her heart.

With a fixed resolution, therefore, to banish every idea of Grovelby from her mind, she attended Lady Ashton to a private concert. They had not been there many minutes, when Standly made his appearance; and in less than an hour, Lord Ashton, with his friend Sir William Sandal, whom Terentia immediately recognized to be the same gentleman who had so highly complimented her person in her first interview with his Lordship, also entered the room; and, after paying his respects to Lady Ashton, he politely, though with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, accosted Terentia by her surname, and with a countenance expressive of tender solicitude enquired after her health, and how long

long she had been resident in this part of the world.

While Lady Ashton, whose antipathy was very great to the Baronet, suspecting, and perhaps with reason, that his company conducted not a little to the late turn in his Lordship's behaviour, answered,

"It is something extremely new, Sir William, that you are to learn in this matter. I dare say Lord Ashton wrote you an account of it as soon as he knew it himself. I am sure you are too much his *confidential friend*, to be ignorant of even the most trivial occurrences in *my family*.

The Baronet bit his lips, and Lady Ashton, with an air of displeasure, retired to another part of the room, leaving Terentia petrified with astonishment at this unexpected effrontery in a person she had scarcely seen, and terrified beyond expression at what Lady Ashton had thrown out—obliged to listen to the pretended friendship of his Lordship, or what was equally disgusting, the unmeaning, yet familiar gallantry in the Baronet, her situation became quite comfortless; and her eyes involuntarily cast a wishful look when ever the door opened, hoping for the entrance of Conyers, whose just remarks would, she knew, edify her mind, which was sedulously intent to improve itself on every occasion that offered.

"Surely," cried the Baronet, observing her, "there is an invisible magnet that draws your attention, Miss Sackville, to the door; or is it an expectation of some happier object, than those you now favour with your company,

company, that debars us of that attention we so much wish to arrest?"

"Ah, Miss Sackville!" whispered Lord Ashton, with a meaning in his countenance not quite so expressive of *friendship* as he perhaps meant it to be, "I see too plainly you are no longer free—I am now convinced that my suspicions are not founded in error, and that you have given your valuable heart to Conyers."

Provoked at this insinuation, which deprived her of the only satisfaction the place afforded, it being impossible to receive any from the music, as the company consisted much more of talkers than hearers, Terentia arose, and went in search of Lady Ashton, whom she found in the coffee-room with Mr. Standly, to whom she was relating the continual ill usage she had met with from her lord, together with her dislike of his companion.

"I am glad you are come," she said to Terentia, "I dare say you have been teased to death with the impertinence of that wretch the baronet; come sit down, and let us take some coffee. I am quite stupid with listening to the music; are not you, Sir?" turning to Standly.

"'Tis impossible to have a dull sensation in your ladyship's company," he answered, "or otherwise I confess a private concert is by no means a favourable entertainment with me."

"I hate it of all things," replied her ladyship, "and when ever it is agreeable we will return home: as to my lord and Sir William,

ham, I don't expect to see them any more this evening.

"With all my heart," answered Standly; and soon after the chairs were called.

That of Lady Ashton's went first; and Terentia was much surprized, that after going, what in her opinion appeared to be twice the way she came, she had not entered the street in which Mr. Burdet resided, she therefore put by the curtain, and enquired of the men the reason of their going a strange way.

They answered they were right, and should reach Mr. Burdet's in a few minutes;—a few minutes elapsed, yet no sign of the street made its appearance—she persisted they were in the wrong road—but she was answered in the negative—again she called, but she called in vain! they had their orders, and knew too well how to execute them, to notice any terrors she might be possessed of.

Her presence of mind, however, did not, in this trying moment, forsake her;—and taking a diamond from her finger, which Lady Ashton had given her the day before, she, with some difficulty, cut round the side-glass, and with the heel of her shoe set herself at liberty; but not without cutting her arm in so shocking a manner, as gave her reason, at the moment, to suppose she could not survive the pain.

In this condition she would, in all probability, have been obliged to re-enter the chair, had not a gentleman, with a black patch over one eye, accompanied by two watchmen, insisted on her being delivered to them.

At the sight of watchmen Terentia's heart sunk within her; she trembled in such a manner

ner that her protector could hardly support her, till a well-known voice vibrated through her soul like that of her guardian angel's, and reassured her of her safety, by saying, "Be not alarmed, dearest Miss Sackville! I am Conyers! your friend Conyers—but ask no questions: to-morrow I will tell you all."

He then put her into another chair, and conveyed her home, leaving her to form what conjectures she thought proper on an adventure, the event of which (had not Providence interfered in her behalf) would doubtless have embittered her future existence.

She was told by Lady Ashton's woman, that her ladyship had retired for the night, and that she had given orders not to be disturbed.

"Is my lord then returned?" said Terentia.

"No ma'am," answered the servant, with a significant shrug, "my lord is as safe in the company of Sir William Sandal, as if he was locked up in the King's Bench; and that being the case, my lady thinks she can safely indulge herself in an agreeable *tete à tete*. Ha, ha! well I declare now 'tis a charming thing to be rich!"

"I don't understand you," said the surprised Terentia, "how! what do you mean?"

"Why there is a thousand ways, ma'am, for a lady of quality to pay a careless husband in his own coin: so they do but consider their confidants with the true spirit of liberality, 'tis ten to one, by the means of back doors, balconies, or some kind appendage to gallantry,

gallantry, but the rover is *amply repaid* for his neglect."

"Well," said Terentia, vexed at this confirmation of her ladyship's indiscretion, "though it must be confessed you have topped your part as a chambermaid, I cannot compliment her ladyship on the sincerity of her confidant—but perhaps, inebriated with the poisonous cup of false-felicity, she has forgot that true spirit of liberality which you seem to hint as a thing so very essential to the art of secret-keeping."

"You have just guessed it, Miss," replied Margaret; "and indeed if it was not for this same employment, our places would scarcely be worth keeping.—The last lady I attended never paid me my wages; but then her gallant was kind to an excess, and that was just the same thing you know; and then my lord had his secrets too. Indeed, upon the whole I had no cause to be pleased when their debts obliged them to leave England, for what with one thing and another, my place was as good as thirty pounds a year; and indeed, all things considered, we had need to be well paid, for I declare, in my last illness, my conscience sadly misgave me; and had not John assured me that our employers and not ourselves would be accountable for the errors we commit on their accounts, I should certainly never have survived it, my terror was so great! for the Scripture saith, there is no lying in the kingdom of heaven."

"And yet, Mrs. Margaret, against conviction you it seems continue your old employment in being accessory, or to connive at the destruction of others; but take heed lest

you

you misapply those gifts with which heaven has endowed you ; for be assured you will not by such mistaken notions, escape the quicksand of remorse on that avenging hand which has promised to requite the evil doer."

" Dear Miss, you have wonderful high notions of religion, and all that—'tis no wonder there are such stratagems on foot—But notwithstanding you think yourself so safe, you must condescend to oblige my lord—nay, if you knew all, you would think it your intrest to comply.

Terentia, much alarmed at this vile insinuation, demanded what she meant by stratagems and contrivances ?

" As to that, Miss, I can as I said before, if I am well rewarded, keep a secret as well as other people : but however, to prevent your standing in your own light, I will if you choose to hear it, tell you what John and my lord said the day he saw you at Northampton."

Terentia thinking that she might gather from this tatler something which concerned her to know, answered " that on condition she would never again trouble her with any more family secrets, she might this once, gratify her loquacity."

Mrs. Margaret, who had always prided herself for being much (that is in her own eyes) above the common run of abigails, found herself extremely piqued at the term loquacity, and was about to reply with some asperity, when her lady's bell ringing, prevented her ; and she had only time to mutter as she shut the door, something about toad-eaters, and idle dependants ! leaving Terentia perplexed

perplexed at the hints she had thrown out, and anxious for the next day's approach, when she determined to inform Mr. Conyers of all that she had heard, and consult him in what manner, and under what pretence she should leave the protection of those who seemed born to disgrace humanity.

"Good Heavens!" thought she, as she sat reflecting on what she had heard, "is it possible that thus the great Essence of all is requited for the sunshine of his favours? Well might the poor invalid complain of the inconsiderate rich! well might he expatiate on their want of justice and humanity, when thus they can vitiate the minds of those who have a claim, as being under their protection, to be instructed in every necessary and moral duty—How at this rate is religion, that bulwark of every other virtue, to be supported? and to what unheard of horrors must that nation be destined, whose religious principles are subverted by dissipation, and whose morality is sacrificed to fashion!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A discovery, which occasions the removal of our Heroine.

AFTER an almost sleepless night, at the hour of six Terentia arose with an intent to write to Mrs. Bryant; but before she had taken pen in hand, a violent uproar in the passage arrested her attention; and on opening the door, she could easily distinguish the voice of Mr. Burdet, who in a violent passion, cried out

“Fine work! fine work truly! not content with disgracing your sex with your continual gadding abroad, but you must make my house the receptacle of your loose desires! the lock of my back door, which I had fitted up for my own private use, is entirely spoiled with picking to let in your gallant in your lord’s absence. I tell you, niece, were you daughter to the Great Mogul, I would not suffer such a breach of morality under my roof.”

“For heaven’s sake, Sir,” answered a voice whose tone evinced it to be Mr. Standly’s, “speak not so loud: on the honour of a gentleman I came hither for no other purpose than to teach the lady the Italian language—and here is the book on which we have been practising.”

“Indeed,” rejoined her ladyship, “Mr. Standly speaks truth, and nothing but the truth—yet if my lord should come home, and find

find you in such a passion, he won't believe a word of what I say ; and then my character must suffer not only in his eyes, but likewise in the world's—in pity to me, therefore, dear Sir, quit us instantly, you shall never more find me capable of so much indiscretion."

"As to your lord's knowing it, I would not burthen my conscience with such a secret for the universe—and so all you have to do is to prepare yourself for your departure, in order to study this same Italian language under some other roof, for positively I will connive at no such imprudent behaviour. He then insisted on Mr. Standly instantly quitting the house ; and returned to his room ruminating on an event which heightened not his opinion of an age whose impieties had long made it not only a subject of dislike, but of utter detestation to a man who had in most of the events of his life guided himself by the reins of rectitude ; and who had made the door, which we have before said opened into a back lane, for the purpose of his morning meditation. It is no wonder, therefore, that on finding it an appendage to indiscretions of this kind, he was too much incensed to give Lady Ashton any quarter.

At seven Terentia ventured down into the parlour, and soon after Conyers entered.

He now related to her what convinced her, that her suspicions, with regard to Lord Ashton, were too well founded ; and that it was in consequence of a discourse overheard by himself between his Lordship and Sir William Sandal, in his way to the concert, which had put it in his power

have her from that destruction they had planned for her.

After returning him her grateful thanks for this singular piece of service, in accents which perhaps wounded the peace she would have wished in any way where her own was not concerned to have preserved, she related the hints thrown out by her ladyship's woman, and what in consequence of lady Ashton's imprudence had fallen from the lips of Mr. Burdet, desiring him to assist her with his advice how to escape the danger which threatened her reputation, from living with a lady so careless of her own, and her peace, from the behaviour of a man so unprincipled as Lord Ashton.

Mr. Conyers had only time to reply, "That she must on no account endanger her character by a continuance in the family; but that he was so peculiarly unhappy, as not to have it in his power to recommend a person who was worthy so precious a charge: that however, he had a friend in whose power he hoped it would be to find out a proper asylum for her, till a more eligible situation offered; to whom he would immediately write; and whose answer he was sure he should receive by the return of the post."

"Miss Sackville," he said, with an air of real vexation, "I am hurt to be obliged to desire you to quit a house, the owner of which regards you with an eye truly paternal; but you must, and that instantly, leave us; or run the hazard of losing what I am convinced is more dear to you than your existence. Indeed, a woman deprived of her good name, is like a jewel deprived of its lustre.

But

But I need not comment on the matter further, than to inform you, that Lord Ashton is endeavouring to get you into his power, for ends the most villainous; and that his lady, though she may be free from actual crimes, is by far too fashionable to be discreet."

Terentia, after gratefully thanking him for his advice, informed him she had been speaking with Mr. Conyers on that subject, and that she meant only to wait till the next day, when he hoped to receive an answer to a letter he was going to write to a friend of his, who he had reason to believe had interest to procure her a more proper asylum; and that in the interim, to prevent any future plans Lord Ashton might form, under pretence of indisposition, she would stay in her own room, except at such times as Lady Ashton required her attendance.

Mr. Burdet, after commending her resolution, exclaimed loudly at the insufferable assurances of our modern fine ladies; averring, that it was chiefly owing to the present mode of education, that the manners of women were totally changed since his remembrance; supposed that the Italian fashion of admitting a *cicisbeo* into their bed-chambers, would next be the rage; and that in a few years every feminine virtue would, like that of true patriotism, be sunk into oblivion.

He then left the room, and Terentia went, as it was her custom, to enquire after her ladyship.

"Lord my dear!" cried her ladyship, as she entered, "did you ever hear such an odd old fellow in your life?—do you know, Mr. Burdet has taken it into his head to take it
ill,

ill, because he saw Mr. Standly go out of the back door this morning just before six : I declare he had been only learning me the Italian language, and here he has made such a disturbance ! I dare say you must have heard him—but however I shall, the moment I can get ready, leave his house ; so you may put your things in readiness as soon as you possibly can ; for positively I won't stay after such treatment—a nasty religious old fellow—I wonder what business he had to go to his devotions so early !

Terenia, whom this declaration had actually discomposed, said she had a violent head-ach, and begged leave to retire : when her ladyship with the greatest good-humour, stopped her, saying, “ she had something to tell her that would put her in spirits ; ” and drawing a chair close to her own, made her sit down. “ My dear Terentia,” she then said, “ it is in your power to render me the greatest service in the world ? will you oblige me ? I am sure I would do any thing to serve you.”

“ There is no reasonable request that Lady Ashton has not a right to expect her highly-favoured friend to comply with,” said Terentia, trembling, lest she should require any thing derogating from that rectitude of action which she had ever made it her study, in her greatest trials, to adhere to.

“ You are so grave, so cautious, and so demure,” cried her ladyship, “ that I declare I am half afraid to tell you what I would wish you to do—I doubt you will think me an unaccountable creature.”

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“ Dearest

“ Dearest Lady Ashton, excuse me the hearing any proposal from one I so much value, where a consciousness evinces it even in idea to be unfit.”

“ You are a strange unaccountable, that’s certain—but as I am sure you cannot be ignorant that my lord adores you, I will venture to tell you, that on your accepting his hand, depends all my future happiness; as in that case I can (in appearance at least) so behave myself that his lordship may claim a divorce, which is the only thing in the world to conduce to both our felicities; for positively I can no longer bear to be linked to one who I know both hates and despises me.”

“ And have I not reason,” thundered out Lord Ashton, who now entered, “ do you suppose I will ever cohabit with a woman so notoriously abandoned! did not Sir William Sandal and myself see your paramour skulk out at the garden gate? But I demean myself by condescending to talk with such a wanton. Remember, madam, I have now for ever done with you—you cannot, after this, expect any further protection from me! Shall I (with an air of insult) send for Standly to conduct you to the place of your future residence? For, by heavens! you sleep no more under the same roof with myself.”

This was too much—notwithstanding lady Ashton, out of false bravery, had gone such lengths, yet she still loved her lord.—And to be thus commanded from his presence, struck her with such a tremour, that it was with much difficulty she could be kept from fainting—

ing—luckily however a shower of tears relieved her ; and she answered :

“ If I must leave you, lord Ashton, let me not be branded with undeserved infamy. I own I have acted imprudently, but not with criminality. I will forego that felicity which I once promised myself, in passing my days pleasingly tranquil in your society, because I am certain it will conduce to your happiness. I have even pleaded in your favour *here* (pointing to Terentia) so much do I wish to render to you that felicity which I have long been convinced my marriage with you has robbed you of.”

“ And if,” cried his lordship, “ you can *here* succeed (taking the almost petrified hand of Terentia) and submit to such a separation as will intitle me to take for life this amiable girl, I will not only live on a footing of friendship with you, but settle such a part of your fortune on you as shall enable Standly to purchase a title.—Say but, dearest Miss Sackville, that you will bless me with your hand, and I shall be but too happy.”

Terentia, no less shocked than surprised at the total indifference which either party paid to the most solemn and sacred of all vows.—shuddering too with horror at a proposal which she could only look on as an insult both to heaven and her own understanding, replied :

That she was exceedingly sorry to see such a misunderstanding between them—that she would most willingly do any thing to contribute to that reconciliation which she ardently wished, and hoped would yet take place;

but that if they both persisted to think of a separation, she hoped they would not take it ill as, in that case, she should most certainly take leave of them, and that instantly, and for ever!

Lord Ashton appeared thunderstruck at this total dismissal of all his hopes; while her ladyship, bent on nothing but her own liberty, cried out, "oh! that odious picture!—but for that—you would have obliged me, and made my lord happy—here, Ashton," (taking from her pocket the picture) "here is your rival! so you may revenge yourself the first time you meet him; for Miss Sackville told me it was an exact resemblance of the original."

His Lordship took the picture, and with much agitation, cried; "d——n seize thee! whoever thou art."—And then turning to Terentia—"Mark me, Miss Sackville! such is the violence of my affection, that either the original of *this*, or *myself*, must fall on our first meeting, except you will swear to make me happy, by being mine for life."

"I will not promise what I never can perform, my lord; but, on my honour, the person for whom that picture was taken, is not, nor ever can be, any thing to me.

"He is very shortly to be married to another, and"—she would have proceeded, but the words died on her lips, and she sunk motionless on the ground.

To see her thus on any other account, would have hurt his lordship beyond conception—but as it was too evident for either his pride or his love, that the cause originated from her affection to his rival, it served but to irritate

ritate him ; and stamping his foot on the floor as he left it, he vowed never to rest till he had taken his revenge—he then told his lady he was going to London, from which place he should send to Mr. Burdet such writings as would intitle her to the sum he had before proposed ; and that if he should ever be happy enough to gain the affections of Miss Sackville, he should expect that her ladyship would be no stumbling block to his happiness.

Her ladyship bowed ; and without one mark of displeasure in her countenance, bid him adieu. And thus for ever ended a connection which took place without one essential ingredient to sweeten that state, which, without a simularity of minds, and an affection founded on prudence, is seldom found to be free from bitters always, as those given by the faculty, by way of stomachics ; but alas ! how differently do they act ! Instead of displacing the vitiated humours of the habit, they corrode (like the curled insect which rests not till it has browsed every green leaf in its power) the mind of those who are unfortunate enough to taste them.

Not at present, however, was lady Ashton sensible of that pain which she had before known—and which, perhaps, she may hereafter feel. She thought of nothing but her approaching happiness with Standly ; and how to bring about the now wished for connection between her lord and Terentia.—She therefore did all in her power to console her when she returned to life ; and attended her to bed on her saying she was unable to sit up—her care did not, however, prevent a fever, which ensued from the anxiety of her

mind which she had sustained in the foregoing discourse, and she was judged to be incapable of attending her ladyship the next day in her journey to town.

This was no matter of concern to Terentia, who hoped, unmolested, in a few days, to pursue a different route—a route, which she trusted, would afford her more serenity of mind than that which she intended to elude—though at present, the dread lest any misfortune should await Mr. Grovesby, through the violence of Lord Ashton, much embittered the pleasing sensations of having escaped, as she hoped for ever, the improper importunities of Lord Ashton, and avoiding being witness to the imprudence of his lady, whom, though she could not pretend to vindicate, she sincerely pitied; believing that the carelessness of him on whom she had fixt her first affections, had been the immediate cause of her thus falling into error.

The next day Mr. Conyers sent her a note, intimating, that he had succeeded in his wish; and that, whenever she was able he himself would conduct her where, he trusted, she would meet with a very gracious reception from those whose minds were more similar to her own, than that of the family she had left.

This was a cordial of more efficacy than any she had swallowed by the advice of her doctor; and in a few days, with a promise from Mr. Burdet that she should see him in town, she left his hospitable mansion; and, protected by his friend Conyers, without farther

farther incident arrived in Hanover-square, at that season of the year when the chilling blasts of Boreas threaten desolation to the humble cot, and the darkened sky warns its winged travellers to retreat from the coming storm.

The transition from the cheerless scene which the country afforded to that of London, at the hour of eight in the evening, in the bleak month of December, was never perhaps more pleasingly experienced than in the mind of Terentia—who had been uncommonly dull during her journey, as Mr. Conyers was, for some reason or other very indifferent company, and so exceedingly absent, that during the last twenty miles nothing more than monosyllables, in answer to any question put by his fair companion, had passed his lips; a circumstance far from being grateful to Terentia, as she feared, and, perhaps, not without reason, that she herself was the cause of that dejection of spirits which was too visible to be overlooked, and, for which, he would assign no reason but those of sighs, or evasive answers to her repeated enquiries after his health.

On taking leave, which he did in less than an hour after his arrival, he with much diffidence pressed the hand she had involuntarily held out, and in a low voice said, “Ah, Mrs Sackville! treat me with more severity, lest I become a traitor to that friendship which I have always held sacred—and add to my present torments the severer pangs of self condemnation.”

He then left her to reflect at leisure on
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what

what he had, as once before, incautiously let fall, and for which he felt as much chagrin as she did curiosity.



CHAPTER XIV.

In which is displayed a very amiable character of a fashionable friend—and some disagreeable occurrences which our heroine meets with at the Opera.

THERE is a certain nameless something in the appearance of some people, which on a first acquaintance, acts so powerfully on the human mind, as to render it an involuntary capture: of that order of beings was Mrs. Mountaign. She was descended from an ancient and honourable family—and her reception of Terentia (who had been recommended by the friend of Mr. Conyers, as a person extremely well qualified to live with her as a companion) was such as evinced her education to be elevated as her birth.

She had married, at the age of twenty, the man of her choice; despising all mercenary views, and seeking felicity, from an affection founded on esteem, and which promised to be as durable as the state of humanity would admit; as her affection was returned from a man equally formed to please in the social or solitary hour.

Mr. Mountaign, though endued with every accomplishment which a liberal education when ingrafted on a fertile genius could insure, was so much above that vain ostentation of parts, which marks the character of our modern wittlings, (many of whom give the world reason to suppose, that they have

adopted to themselves the Turkish idea, with regard to the living principle of our sex) that he preferred a conversation, and that on the most exalted, as well as refined subjects, with his amiable consort, to those formed in convivial orgies with the votaries of Bacchus and Venus.

A short time convinced Terentia that Mr. Conyers had not deceived her expectations; she found in Mrs. Mountaign all that was amiable, noble, and humane; a pleasing regularity ran through the whole house: and disorder, notwithstanding they kept up an extensive acquaintance, seemed banished, not only from the drawing room, but from every department of this well-regulated family—an affable sweetness of manners, graced with a becoming dignity of soul, made this amiable woman valued by her acquaintance and adored by her domestics, who were ever ready to fly on the wings of gladness to prevent her wishes: so far had her manner gained an ascendancy over their grateful minds, that a look was sufficient to enforce any duty required at their hands.

An elegant plenty graced her board; yet she sedulously avoided needless profusion—and totally disregarded that ostentation which is but the emblem of a mind unblest with sensibility, and which, though it may please the eye of folly and dissipation, can never heighten the character of its displayer in the minds of the truly great.

A few mornings after Terentia had been a resident in this mansion of peace and serenity, as she was walking through a passage, she thought she heard the voice of Mrs. Mountaign,

taign, though at so early an hour as seven ; and wondering what could have occasioned her to rise so early, she was about to enquire after her health, when the voice of a child expressed itself in the following manner :

“ Indeed, Mamma, the poor boy was almost naked ; and I am sure I have more shoes than I want—and I would have given him my frock, but nurse would not let me, fearing you would be angry ; but I know he will be there again to-day, and if you will let me give him my money, I will get a double task ; indeed, Mamma, I will ; yes, and I will be very careful how I pronounce all I read with a proper cadence ; I will, indeed.”

“ Well, my best love,” answered Mrs. Mountaign, “ I will indulge you in this noblest propensity of the human mind—and to let you see that it is the first wish of my heart to conduce to your happiness, I will not only give you leave to dispense your favours, but reimburse you with double the sum expended.”

The curiosity of Terentia was raised on hearing this, and she involuntarily tapped at the door, and begged permission to enter.

“ Ah ! Madam, had I known how charmingly you had been engaged, I should not have wondered at your early rising : why was I not before permitted to see this lovely child ?”

“ For no other reason than that I thought the hours which I dedicate to forming her young ideas, too early for a modern fine lady ; and such, after living with lady Ashton, I expected to find you ; but a few days convinced me you were a more rational be-

ing; and you have only prevented my wish to introduce you to my little charmer."

She then gave the child a lesson in 'Mason on Self Knowledge'; and surprised Terentia with the progress she had made; for though she had but just entered her sixth year, she read with a proper emphasis—and the care of a tender and judicious parent, stood confessed in the justness of her delivery and the cadence of her voice.

After two hours spent in this pleasing task, Mrs. Mountaign and her friend went down to breakfast, and soon after entered Miss Hambleton, almost out of breath with earnestness, to relate a tale she had heard by her maid; when she disturbed her, as she said, to let her know the breakfast waited.

"Mercy on us! Mrs. Mountaign," she cried, do you know that Miss Wingly has eloped from boarding school—and Lady Bab has been in hysterics all night—She has actually gone off with a poor usher."

"Lady Bab has by no means done her duty to her child;" answered Mr Mountaign, as he glanced an eye of gratitude, as it seemed, on his lady for a conduct diametrically opposite.

"Lady Bab, my dear," replied that lady, "imbibed, very early in life, the false notion which many, as well as herself, are possessed of, that a mother cannot do her duty by her children without entirely giving up the article of dress, and so rather than sit hoodwinked all day in a close cap, she has inconsiderately given her up to the management of others; when, had she dedicated a few of those hours which are spent in dosing, and unprofitable slumbers,

slumbers, to the improvement of her mind, she might have done her child justice, and at the same time been properly equipped for the drawing room.—I am exceedingly sorry, however, for her ladyship, as her own reflections will doubtless add to her sorrows; but is there no hope of rescuing her before it is too late;—perhaps she may yet repent the rash step, and all may again be well?

“ Lord, no, ma’am !” answered Miss Hambleton, “ why her ladyship is so frightened, she cannot stir—and then it is two days since she was missed; however, she can’t, in this case, demand a farthing of her fortune; and so lady Bab may *now* make herself comfortable in a marriage with Mr. Benson, who, you know, would have had her ladyship long ago, had not the heavy demand which Miss Wingly had on the estate (in case she married to please her mother) made it rather an awkward piece of business.”

“ Lady Bab,” cried Mrs. Mountaign, “ cannot be so void of principle as to make herself *comfortable* at such an expence as her child’s happiness—as that would deprive her of the only means of retrieving her lost character, which, if the man is worthy as I should hope, none but such characters are suffered to superintend the morals of youth) she may yet do and taste the sweets of virtuous love, perhaps in a greater degree than her poor mistaken mother has ever done in a higher sphere.”

“ Lord, Ma’am ! why he is the veriest profligate that ever existed; she must certainly be very unhappy; and so, if I was lady Bab,

Bab, I would think no more about her—than if I had no child at all.”

“ Very charitable doctrine, truly,” said Mrs. Mountaign, (looking at Terentia) “ and it does much honour to the goodness of your heart—but I hope you do not intend to preach it to Lady Bab—as if she is irritated enough to think of acting in the manner you hint at, it would be cruel to heighten her displeasure.”

“ I am sure, Ma’am,” cried Miss Hambleton, “ I am not at all sorry, except on her ladyship’s account—Miss Wingly was never a favourite of mine, I assure you—a little proud upstart !”

“ You have already,” said Mrs. Mountaign, smiling, “ pretty well convinced us of that—but is lady Bab to be spoke with ? Does she see company, or is she quite inconsolable ?”

“ Dear ! yes ma’am, to be sure, she is inconsolable enough ; I don’t think she has seen any body yet, except Mr. Benson.”

“ If she sees Mr. Benson,” said Mrs. Mountaign, “ I should suppose we might be admitted. You are a particular acquaintance, you know, and so we will go together.”

“ Lord, ma’am ! how can you think my spirits could support such a shock ?—I declare I should faint at the sight of poor lady Bab ! if it was any other misfortune, I would go with all my heart ; but indeed you must excuse me—for I promised to call on lady Halcroft in my way to an auction, and I dare say she has been waiting for me this hour—though I am sure I should be happy to hear
that

that her ladyship had recovered from her fright; for she is a most prodigious favourite of mine, and always was."

She then looked at her watch—declared she had out-staid her time; and left them at leisure to reflect on this piece of fashionable friendship.

Mrs. Mountaign, as soon as breakfast was over, ordered the carriage, and went to console, as well as she could, her friend lady Bab; and to do all in her power to reconcile her to her mistaken child—she soon returned, however, much chagrined at the disappointment she had met with in being told, by her own woman, that her ladyship, being much enraged at Miss Wingly's indiscretion, was that instant gone to St. James's church, in order to make Mr. Benson master of herself and fortune.

In the evening they went to the Opera; and Terentia was paying that due respect to the performers which they justly merit, when the opposite box opened for some company; and instantly entered young Grovesby, and a lady, too beautiful for the eyes of Terentia to behold without emotion—she called, however, her native dignity to her aid, and so well succeeded, as to be collected enough to hear Mrs. Mountaign say to a lady in the next box:

"Lady Belinda Sheffield is a most charming woman; it is a great pity—and very wonderful that Mr. Grovesby cannot see her with the eyes of the multitude, but there is no accounting for taste."

"True, Ma'am," said the lady, "for I was informed, no longer ago than yesterday,
that

that the creature he so much prefers, is a low bred country girl; but however, his taste will signify nothing; for Sir Paulet is positive, and will be obeyed."

"You amaze me," rejoined Mrs. Mountaign, "for heaven's sake, who could be your informant? I knew he had an aversion to lady Belinda, but never heard of any other attachment."

"Oh! one I can credit, I assure you; for it was no other than his cousin, Miss Musgrove, who was an eye witness to his folly, last summer, in the country."

"That he may have seen the person he can prefer to Belinda, I can credit," replied Mrs. Mountaign, "but that a man of Mr. Grovesby's discernment, can have fixed his affection on a lowbred creature, I own staggers my belief."

Madame Mara now coming foward, Mrs. Mountaign turned from the lady, in order to inform her friend that it was that celebrated performer; but so much had the foregoing discourse disconcerted Terentia, that she paid little attention to what she said in her favour; and answered in so absent a manner, that Mrs. Mountaign was convinced (though ignorant of the real cause) that something had very much affected her; and kindly offered to return home if she was ill, as she feared by her countenance was the case.

This kind construction rather exhilarated the spirits of Terentia, who, so long as she found herself unsuspected, tried, and in a great measure succeeded, to become calm—they were soon after, however, to undergo a
more

more severe trial; for no sooner did Grovesby perceive Mrs. Mountaign's party, than he watched for an opportunity of approaching it; and, in the most tender manner, after enquiring after her health, solicited Mrs. Mountaign to treat as a sister all his soul held dear; and suffer him, in her presence, to breakfast with Miss Sackville the next morning.

Though Terentia was gratified by the respect he paid her, her ideas were too delicate to give him reason to suspect she would, circumstanced as he was, ever admit his visits—she feared not his honour, as his character set him above so low an idea; but she feared for his peace of mind and for her own.—She therefore, after thanking him for his good opinion, in a language expressive of the utmost gratitude, conjured him, as he valued the peace of her to whom he was shortly to be united, his own, and lastly of her mind, together with her yet unspotted character, never to entertain a thought so derogatory from that of true friendship, as noticing one so low in the world's esteem.

While Mrs. Mountaign who was now no longer at a loss to find out the sudden disorder of Terentia; (which, as the recommendation she had received with her, though through Grovesby, was by a young lady she before had not the least idea of) said, with a smile, "I shall be most certainly glad of your company, Sir, though I own I am not quite satisfied with a request which, I fear, will answer no end but that of rendering you still more wretched. If you cannot," she added in a grave tone, "make the amiable unfortunate happy,

happy, do not by a rashness unbecoming your character, render her despicable in the eyes of calumny : you are already in the world's eye, the husband of lady Belinda—it is therefore descending from *yourself*, to profess an affection for another.”

“ You are right, Madam,” replied Grovesby ; “ but if lady Belinda had the least grain of generosity in her disposition, she could not when she knows my situation, merely to gratify her ambition, which is as much centered in my fortune as that of my father's is in my family, thus persist in holding me to a promise extorted by the cruellest of parents—cruel even in the agonies of death ! for so we thought him at the time, or I had never complied ! Fate may join—but never can match hearts so ill paired as ours.”

Mr. Mountaign, with another gentleman, now entered and prevented Grovesby from continuing a subject which had rendered him still more amiable in the eyes of Terentia ; she thought lady Belinda cruel and indelicate—and herself the most unfortunate of human beings. She regretted, with the most poignant grief, the loss of his picture ; and was tormented with a thousand horrors, lest lord Ashton should, from the madness of his passions, be tempted to some act of violence to this most amiable of men.

Mrs. Mountaign seeing her so uneasy, insisted on going home ; and as soon as Mr. Grovesby had returned to lady Belinda, the chairs were ordered.

Terentia had no opportunity till she got home to enquire of her present benefactress, by whom she was recommended, which she
much

much wanted to do, strongly suspecting, from the friendly footing on which she saw her two friends, that to Mr. Grovesby alone she stood indebted for her present happiness, in being placed with a family so truly good as that of Mr. Mountaign.

As soon as she found herself alone with her kind friend, she told her what she suspected; and begged she would not deceive her; as, however unfortunate she should think herself in being reduced to the necessity of leaving so happy a situation, she could not on any account think of continuing a dependant on the bounty of Mr. Grovesby.

“ My dear girl! let not your over delicacy, betray you to inconveniencies much more formidable, in your opinion than the reality would prove. Mr. Grovesby is entitled to an affluent fortune; and he values it only as it enables him to do good—suppose your ideal dependence was real—the rectitude of his thoughts would teach him to think that himself alone was the obliged! and surely your gratitude would inspire you with a wish to give pleasure to the man who adores you—that, however, is not the case; for though, with you, I cannot doubt but it was through his means that I have the satisfaction of enjoying so agreeable a friend, yet it was by the means of a lady that I heard you were at liberty, and that you would be, what I have found you, a real acquisition to my family—That lady is, however, I am well convinced, a very intimate friend of Mr. Grovesby’s—yet I am confident, she knows not his attachment to you—as she was wondering with me, what could
make

make him so indifferent to the beauty of lady Belinda."

"But how, dearest Madam, can I continue with prudence in a place where I shall be so liable to see and converse with an object, who I own, has too much merit for my peace!"

"He will soon, my dear, give up his liberty, and I fear his felicity, by marrying lady Belinda; his prudence will then get the better of his passion—that and reason must be their guide.—Mr. Conyers, it is evident, greatly admires you—he is handsome—and you told me, worthy."

"Ah, Madam!" cried Terentia, hiding her head in the bosom of Mrs. Mountaign—"tell me not of Mr. Conyers—I am, indeed, most wretched! torn by the contending sensations which this destructive passion naturally inflicts upon my mind—an outcast too in the world's eye!—A creature of no esteem! Oh! Madam, I am unequal to that task of humility which the cruelty of my fate inflicts."

"Gracious heaven! protect me from the additional torment which the poisoned darts of erring pride at this moment pierce me with; what have I done to Miss Musgrove, that she should endeavour to degrade me? Surely as Mr. Grovesby is now going to be another's, she might let me pass my wretched days free from the slander of her tongue! as I can *now* no more give her pain on his account."

"Does Miss Musgrove, then, regard
Grovesby

Grovesby with an eye of partiality?" cried Mrs. Mountaign, with a look of surprise.

Terentia, in reply, related her behaviour during her residence at Bryant Hall.—And Mrs. Mountaign observed,—it was exceedingly strange, if it really proceeded from the cause she suspected, that Miss Musgrove should not only continue, but increase the friendly attention she had ever been known to pay lady Belinda.

Terentia answered,—that to Mrs. Bryant herself, the manner of Miss Musgrove had always appeared inexplicable—and that she wished her friendship to lady Belinda might prove sincere.

Mrs. Mountaign joined in the wish; and all that the goodness of her heart suggested, she did to soothe the sorrow which stood confessed in the countenance of her friend; but company coming in to supper, she was obliged to leave her to her own disagreeable reflections.

Terentia, however, whose mind had long discovered that true happiness and humanity are incompatible—turned her thoughts to sublimer subjects; and by the help of that religion and philosophy which ever marked her character on cool deliberation, even in the severest trials, the tumults of her mind became less agonizing—they were even converted into a tender emotion—she prayed for the happiness of Grovesby, and tried to be content with her fate.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XV.

Interesting interview—with more mortifications.

THE next morning, after attending Mrs. Mountaign in the duties of the nursery, she followed her into the parlour, where sat Grovelby, whose countenance discovered but too well the ill state of his mind. He was so deeply engaged in thought, that he saw them not till Mrs. Mountaign signified her desire to know if he had seen Miss Fortescue? the lady by whom Terentia was recommended.

This enquiry was accompanied with such a look of raillery, that it heightened the colour which before had subsided in the cheeks of Grovelby; and with some confusion he answered;

“ I wish not, madam, from you, to conceal the friendship I have for this amiable girl! it is founded on an esteem which never can cease till the cold hand of time has benumbed my reasoning faculties, and made me insensible to her perfections! but be not alarmed at my seeming rashness: this is the last time I will ever, by visiting her, give you cause to blame my conduct: to-morrow filial duty obliges me to subject myself to wretchedness! after which it would be criminal to see the only woman in the world that could confer real happiness on your ill-fated friend! My father, dearest madam,” turning to Terentia, has given me his promise to make you easy
with

with regard to that support, which the cruelty of your fate denies you, and in the company of Mrs. Bryant I trust you will taste that felicity which I shall never cease to regret the not being a party in.—He stopped, for the emotion of Terentia was too visible for his peace;—he could not proceed.

Fast locked in the inaccessible folds of her heart, was the gratitude of Terentia, for a conduct at once so gratifying to her dejected mind—to her delicacy—and to that real affection which she had long borne him. But the dumb eloquence of her eyes expressed it with much more energy than the power of speech could have done; and pierced ten thousand daggers in the heart that could only confer a favour where his whole soul (had not filial piety prevented him) would have claimed an alliance, which death only could have severed.

He stood motionless for some minutes—he pressed the hand he held to his lips—he would have uttered something by way of fortifying the mind, which he plainly perceived stood in need of such a prevention, to save it from despondency. But alas! in the care of the object of his affection, he forgot the state of his own mind, till a faintishness informed him it was time to leave her who had already bereaved him of the power to tranquillize a soul which seemed as it were torn from its better half; when with looks more disordered than those of a poor culprit condemned to an ignominious death, he hastily left the room, though entirely unfitted for his promised

mised appearance in Lady Belinda's dressing room at the hour of ten.

Terentia, not less agitated, begged Mrs. Mountaign to excuse her appearance at breakfast; and retired to her room hopeless of any future felicity on this side eternity.—“Why, Oh Grovesby!” cried she, as she entered it, “why did I ever know thy worth! or why didst thou, exalted as thou art, condescend to notice the friendless Terentia! yet had my part in life been allotted to act in the sphere where affluence yields the pleasures of life! with what pleasing transport could I have spent my days in watching and preventing the natural alloys which in youth embitter humanity! and by the kind assiduity of true affection, have smoothed the rugged path of thy declining life!”

In the evening, by the persuasion of Mrs. Mountaign, she accompanied that lady to Drury-lane, to see the soul-moving Mrs. Siddons perform the Grecian Daughter; and Terentia, fearful of seeing Grovesby or his party, scarcely dared turn her eyes from the stage the whole evening.

She had the mortification, however, to observe, just as the curtain was falling, something still more terrific; for Sir William Sandal, followed by Lord Ashton, in order to see the new entertainment, now entered the next box; and the former, with his usual familiarity, enquired where such divinity had been concealed since he last had the honour of seeing her? While the latter, though more distant, suffered not his eye to attend to any other object; and by their officiousness,

rendered

rendered the situation of Terentia truly distressing.

To elude the perpetual staring of the one, and save herself from answering the unmeaning questions of the other, under pretence of sitting near the door, she changed seats with Mrs. Mountaign; but her distress was not lessened when, on directing her eyes to the last box on that side of the house in which she sat, she saw, not only her calumniator, Miss Musgrove, but Lady Belinda Sheffield; they appeared deeply engaged in conversation, but as she had not the spirit of divination, she could not know that Lady Ashton's woman had furnished them with a tale of scandal; the detail of which, in their opinion, far surpassed the dull moral which happened to be set forth to view in the new entertainment. She felt herself, however, much more at ease on this account, as she dreaded, if seen by Miss Musgrove, of being herself the subject of her contemptuous raillery.

Very soon after entered Mr. Grovesby; who, for motives of business, as he told Lady Belinda, could not reach the house before that hour: but whether that was really the case, I will not pretend to aver, as I must confess, from the paleness of his countenance, he appeared rather to have indulged himself with the enjoyment of his own sad thoughts, which even in this gay circle, seemed to predominate.

They found, on their return, the avenues of the house much crowded; and it was some time before they could get disentangled from the multitude which surrounded them. In doing so, Terentia found the arm of some

mised appearance in Lady Belinda's dressing room at the hour of ten.

Terentia, not less agitated, begged Mrs. Mountaign to excuse her appearance at breakfast; and retired to her room hopeless of any future felicity on this side eternity.—“Why, Oh Grovesby!” cried she, as she entered it, “why did I ever know thy worth! or why didst thou, exalted as thou art, condescend to notice the friendless Terentia! yet had my part in life been allotted to act in the sphere where affluence yields the pleasures of life! with what pleasing transport could I have spent my days in watching and preventing the natural alloys which in youth embitter humanity! and by the kind assiduity of true affection, have smoothed the rugged path of thy declining life!”

In the evening, by the persuasion of Mrs. Mountaign, she accompanied that lady to Drury-lane, to see the soul-moving Mrs. Siddons perform the Grecian Daughter; and Terentia, fearful of seeing Grovesby or his party, scarcely dared turn her eyes from the stage the whole evening.

She had the mortification, however, to observe, just as the curtain was falling, something still more terrific; for Sir William Sarsdal, followed by Lord Ashton, in order to see the new entertainment, now entered the next box; and the former, with his usual familiarity, enquired where such divinity had been concealed since he last had the honour of seeing her? While the latter, though more distant, suffered not his eye to attend to any other object; and by their officiousness,

rendered

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one assisting her through a door-way: she turned to see to whom she was obliged, and found it was Lord Ashton; who in a low voice said, "Don't be frightened, my angel! it is your Ashton who protects you, and will continue so to do, through every difficulty in which he has the power to befriend you."

The concert scheme instantly rushed into her mind, and so impressed it with terror, that she involuntarily grasped the arm of Mr. Mountaign with such force, that he started, and with a look of surprize, asked her if she had received any hurt by being next the wall?

Fearful of irritating his enterprising lordship, yet ashamed of the liberty she had taken with Mr. Mountaign, she could only say, with much confusion, she had hurt her foot.

His lordship now sprung forward, and insisted, as there was but one gentleman in company, to see her safe through the crowd. It was in vain to resist what she could not prevent; and as Mr. Mountaign, in order to protect his lady from being farther incommoded, had resigned her to his care, she was obliged to accept what was highly repugnant to her wish.

He was running on in a stile of gallantry, equally incongruous for the tongue of a married man, and distressing to the delicate soul of Terentia—when the voice of Miss Musgrove vibrated through her ear, and caused her to shrink from the hold she had taken.

"Miss Sackville," cried his lordship in a tone equally terrific, "you will certainly be down if you thus let go your hold; why will you not," in a softer tone, "confide in the
man

man who would protect you at the hazard of his life?"

"See!" cried Miss Musgrove, in a loud whisper, to Lady Belinda, "the attraction of some people? the Bath tale I find is not untrue: well! I pity poor Lady Ashton; by all accounts she is a most amiable woman!"

By this time they had extricated themselves from the croud; but the ideas of Terentia were still enveloped in the shade of despondency; and it was with the utmost difficulty that she reached the spot where her friends stood expecting her. In turning to see if her malignant enemy still pursued her, she met the eye of Sir Paulet, who having sat with some friends in a different part of the house, she had not seen before, and who now turned from her saying,

"I am quite satisfied, my sweet virtuous fair one! I would not believe cousin Musgrove, till my own eyes convinced me of the truth I doubted."

As Mr. Mountaign was just at the instant helping his lady into the carriage, they neither of them heard what almost deprived Terentia of her reason.

There was an air of triumph in the countenance of Lord Ashton when he took his leave, that opened a large field in the mind of Terentia for conjecture. She fancied that he had himself taken pains to calumniate her in the eyes of her friends; and she was right in her supposition.

That nobleman having found out, by his own diligence, joined to that of his servant, the origin of what had given him so much disturbance; and being also apprized of his intended

nuptials, had now formed a wish to gratify his desires, without the expence and trouble of divorcing his lady, and conceiving he could not adopt a more possible expedient to accomplish his villainous scheme, than to injure the character of Terentia, and thus to undermine virtue, which, while protected from the horrors of poverty, he was sensible would be proof against all temptation.

This he foresaw would be no hard task, as Lady Ashton now openly avowed her attachment to Standly; and was at this instant embarked for the Continent in his company; having first, by the help of her faithful Abigail, given it out, by way of exculpating in some measure her own character, that her lord's attachment to Terentia had alone been the means of driving her from her native land. A striking proof this of the dangerous progress which vice makes if once admitted to blacken the principles of human nature.

CHAPTER XVI.

In which the calumniator of our Heroine appears triumphant.

FROM the play, Lord Ashton and his friend ordered their carriage to Brookes's; the former not a little exhilarated by the idea that the greatest obstacle to his wishes was now removed, by approaching the marriage of his rival, and that a short time would put in his power what he had long been anxious to possess.

In their way they perceived a crowd, and on enquiring into the cause, the servant informed them it was occasioned by the breaking down of a gentleman's carriage.

Sir Paulet Grovesby, for it was no other, was lamenting that a hack was not to be found, and that the dampness of the pavement would certainly be productive of a fit of the gout.

Lord Ashton no sooner perceived the baronet, than in terms of the utmost politeness he insisted on his taking a place in his carriage.

The offer was gratefully accepted, and after a short encomium on the powers of a Sidons, Sir Paulet introduced the subject which lay next his heart—the approaching nuptials of his son—embellishing it with the beauty, fortune, good-nature, and shining abilities of his daughter-in-law elect.

“Ah! Sir Paulet,” answered Ashton, “he has now made a choice worthy your notice;
it

it was well *you* interfered, or he would by all accounts have been finely taken in."

A compliment to his sagacity seldom lost its power with the baronet; he now without hesitation enlarged on the subject; said the person his lordship alluded to was an artful little gipsy, and that but for the greatest good fortune in the world he should have been cajoled (to please his son) out of an annuity to make her independent.

"Independent!" cried Sir William with a forced laugh; "How is this, Ashton? I thought your lordship had long before this set her above dependance."

Sir Paulet, exhilarated at this discovery, answered,

"I beg your pardon, but indeed it was entirely owing to my ignorance of this matter, that I was persuaded to this intention, or otherwise I should not have affronted your generosity by supposing she stood in need of any other assistance. I am extremely happy to find her in such good hands; and will before I sleep, inform my son that she is in no danger of breaking her heart for the loss of him; for his humanity led him to suppose she returned his passion."

"His vanity rather," cried Sir William: "Suppose, Ashton, you return the bridegroom elect the portrait which Miss Sackville presented you with; it may have a good effect on his mind, and save him the trouble of sitting again; for no doubt Lady Belinda will be pleased with such a present;—it is really a well finished piece."

"Pshaw," replied Ashton, "this is really ungenerous, Sir William;—to boast of a lady's favours

favours is below the true man of gallantry—'tis allowable only in those who think themselves sufficiently happy in passing for what they have no pretension to."

"True, true," cried the Baronet, piqued at the bare idea that his son had been so egregiously duped. "But I do not, will not, believe a son of mine could be guilty of such a folly; unless I have ocular demonstration, I shall think you mean to insult my judgment of one who, let me tell you, gentlemen, is not to be slandered with impunity.—What, though I his father make a little free?—s'death, I would strike any man down who dared to speak lightly of his understanding!"

"Nay, Sir Paulet," cried Lord Ashton, "don't think hardly of my friend; on my honour he speaks a fact—and though I detest the bare idea of the meanness this implies, I must convince you of your judgment" (shewing the picture).

"Well, gentlemen, I can only say I am deceived—greatly deceived—to have the portrait of my family handed about by a———excuse me, gentlemen, (wrapping his under lip over his upper one) for d—me if I do not feel myself more hurt at this public folly, than if he had kept a seraglio in private: the fellow had no sagacity; none at all—a very idiot would have acted with more circumspection."

"Not quite so sagacious as you, Sir Paulet," said Ashton, with a sneer, "but as he has now convinced the world he saw his error, this trifling affair will soon be buried in oblivion; and for the future 'tis ten to one

if the spirited behaviour of Lady Belinda does not teach him to be more on his guard."

By this time they had reached the baronet's place of residence in Parliament-street. The two friends highly delighted to find a means of lessening the ill-fated Terentia, in the eyes of all who could serve her, drove to their usual diversion; and the baronet, brimful of the story, desired his man to acquaint him when young Mr. Grovesby returned; resolving, however, to omit that part of the sarcasm which was likely to endanger the life of him, who he well knew had a spirit to defend himself when injured.

In an hour he heard him enter; the man delivered his message; but Mr. Grovesby complained of a violent head-ach, and desired him to ask if his presence could not be dispensed with.

The truth was, his reflections on the coming day were far from pleasing. Lady Belinda, in the presence of Terentia, appeared to want even those small pretensions, which in his opinion she had ever had to perfection. Her manner was too lively; she appeared to have none of that feminine softness, which is so necessary to sooth the mind, when harassed by disappointments. She might please in the gay circle; and cheer by her sprightliness the house of festivity; but the solace of sympathy glowed not in her bosom. Born to affluence, and unchecked by misfortune, her heart knew no joy but when surrounded by a crowd; and no felicity arose in her bosom if music, cards, or company filled not up the moment. Can the man of sentiment, thought he (as the man entered with his message), taste
felicity

felicity with a partner so every way unequal to creating it? Oh no! had the lovely Terentia, decked in the pleasing robe of humility, but blessed my future life, I might have expected all that ideal bliss, which my enraptured fancy had once formed. But here my prospects are so void of light, that the landscape, when I would view it through a flattering telescope, disgusts my eye by the darkness of its hue.

With a countenance in which dejection was too strongly painted to escape a father's penetration, he obeyed the unwelcome summons, as the servant informed him it could by no means be dispensed with.

Sir Paulet, without further preface, related his meeting with Lord Ashton, and the discovery he had made of the perfidy of Miss Sackville; and added, "Thank heaven, I shall now be exempted from allowing the specious little witch the provision I intended her."

Grovesby was persisting in her innocence, and that the false imputations, with which Ashton had branded her, were merely the effect of his bad success; when the picture, like the blight of the unhealthy east to the opening bud, pierced every avenue of his soul, and stopped that luxuriance of words which were sprung up to defend a character so aspersed, as he thought, with undeserving calumny.

For some moments he stood motionless; but, on an evidence so strong, her perfidy stood too clearly evinced to admit of extenuation; yet, to believe her culpable, required a heart less tinctured with the tender passion than Grovesby's; and though he could not

now either with justice to himself, or virtue, plead her cause, yet a secret hope beamed over his mind that she was still innocent; though how to reconcile those circumstances with that hope, required an abler investigator of causes and events, than himself.

Dissatisfied with all he had heard, and depressed with his own situation, he retired from Sir Paulet, who perhaps felt too much joy at being released from an act in which his heart had no interest to breathe one sigh for the supposed depravity of an unsuspecting orphan.

Blush, Humanity, at an idea so incongruous to the professors of Christianity, yet so often traced in the bosom of Avarice!

CHAPTER XVII.

In which our heroine leaves her present residence, and arrives at a cottage. Her reception there ; with some account of the doctor, the curate, &c. &c.

THE thoughts of Terentia were not more tranquil, to be supposed culpable in the eyes of Grovelby—and in danger of being a subject for the numerous retailers of scandal which infest the societies of the great ; doubtless too, deprived by the prejudice of Sir Paulet, of the friendship of the sympathising Mrs. Bryant—nay, perhaps, in danger of losing her present benefactor, was a shock too forcible. The powers of nature shrunk at so rude a blast, and she fainted in the arms of Mr. Mountaign as the carriage made its first movements towards Hanover-square.

“ Good Heavens !” cried Mrs. Mountaign, the sight of lady Belinda has deprived this unfortunate girl of all that fortitude which has hitherto supported her—and Grovelby too ; he feels the hard restriction of a father’s power with an equal pang ; strange, that in a point where the happiness of his future existence is concerned, Sir Paulet should continue so arbitrary.

“ Extremely unjust,” answered Mr. Mountaign ; “ for the sentimental soul of Grovelby can never taste felicity with a woman of her ladyship’s cast.—Why has title and affluence

insignificant as is their real value, so great an ascendancy over the human heart?"

The revival of Terentia gave a fresh subject for compassion, as she now related the reason of her fainting.—To console and fortify her in this unmerited affliction was their first care—and, from her natural strength of mind, she was at length prevailed on to consider the opinion of the world as secondary, and to take refuge in the consciousness of being free from intentional error; while her kind friends proposed sending her to an old servant of theirs till the present rumour, so destructive to her peace, had subsided.

The countenance of Terentia, like the sun beaming from a cloud, was so expressive of the calm which took possession of her mind at this intelligence, that the heart of Mr. Mountaign experienced unusual satisfaction. A tear of gladness strayed unbidden down his cheek at having it in his power to rescue this amiable unfortunate from the pointed finger of envy, and the more dangerous pursuit of licentiousness.

The next morning early she was conveyed to a village in H——shire, and placed in the cottage of a Mrs. Swinton, a plain country woman, who pretended to be endowed with the sagacity of a Solomon, and who, to use her own expression, could "see as far into a mill stone as them that pecks it;" and as Mr. Mountaign had left her with professions of eternal friendship, she was thoroughly convinced, in her own mind, that something *more* than friendship subsisted between them; she therefore, on observing her visitor shed
the

the tear of regret on his taking leave, comforted her in the following manner :

“ Come, come, Ma’am, don’t be low spirited—I dare say master wont be long before he sees H—shire again—to be sure he is a sweet gentleman—and it is a pity that he did not know some people before his wings was tied, as the saying is. Howsomdever life is very uncertain—and who knows how things may turn out.—Don’t despair—don’t despair.—I know I am right—I know your little heart is touched—you are so like poor Kitty—she used to set by the hour together musing under that tree there—to be sure I thought she would have run wild because Jonathan Tib proved false—I often prognosticated as much—but she would never believe it.—Howsomdever, she was convinced, at last, that old heads are wiser than young ones—for Jonathan, somehow or other, took a dislike to her, and went to the East Indies. Well, and after all, it was, as it happened, for the best—for soon com’d a vast rich gentleman, and took the great house there—and as sure as you are alive, he fell in love with poor Kit, and married her out of hand—and now she dresses as well as the parson’s lady herself.—But I’ll let her know you are here—she’ll be wonderfully pleased to see you—for Kit’s got a great notion of gentility, for all she was born in this here cot ; but no wonder—for her grandmother, I assure you, was wet nurse to a duke !”

How long this uninteresting harangue would have lasted, it is impossible to say, had not the clergyman’s maid now entered, to
enquire

enquire if Mrs. Swinton had any fowls fit for the spit.

"Fit for the spit!—fit for the spit!" cried Mrs. Swinton, with a look of consequence; "tis a likely thing, truly, that I should have fowls for your company, when my daughter Kitty never touches any thing but poultry.—No—no, no—no; I have got a few just for her use, and wo'n't part with any if the great Mogul wanted them; besides, they are three shillings a piece."

"Do you think," said the maid, with a look of disappointment, "I can get any in the village? I should not mind what I gave for them, so I could but get some; as we have got some very particular company to dine to day, and my mistress will be sadly grieved to have nothing but butcher's meat."

"Butcher's meat!—butcher's meat!—and when pray was your table graced with any thing else?—I dare say it is so long since you spitted a fowl, you will be at a loss to do it—besides, I tell you they are three shillings a piece, and will not suit your master's pocket—no—no—they are not fit for a poor man's table."

The colour of the girl's countenance expressed a just resentment at an affront which at once pointed at her master's poverty, and her own judgment, and she replied:

"You are strangely altered, Mrs. Swinton, to what you used to be!—and, truly, since your heart can thus jest with the troubles of yout betters, I do not think you worthy of that good fortune which has befallen you. My master is as good a gentleman as ever graced a pulpit—and would scorn to
have

have taken your goods without paying for them." An honest tear of indignation bedewed the face of this faithful domestic as she quitted the house where unfeeling ignorance had wounded a better heart than sometimes falls to the lot of nobility.

Ah! thought Terentia, who would wish for prosperity, when its pernicious poison can thus corrupt even those confined within the narrow bounds of uncultivated nature?

The maid was no sooner gone, than Mrs. Swinton began to expatiate on the poverty of Mr. Fairfax—who, she said, had not had a new cassock these seven years—and that his wife was a mean dowdy—and his daughter fit for no one earthly purpose but to make verses and read outlandish books.

"Mrs. Fairfax a mean dowdy!" said Terentia, whose curiosity was raised by this description; "I thought you had intimated her being as fashionable a lady as your own daughter."

"No—no, no—no, you take me wrong—'tis not Mrs. Fairfax that I put on a footing with my Kitty—'tis quite another guest woman, I assure you—'tis the doctor's lady, Madam Sperney, that I mean—they—I should hardly have denied them my poultry. Why all them there fields, as far as ever you can see, are the doctor's—indeed there is no end to his riches—and folks say as how he will soon be made a bishop."

"Then I hope," said Terentia, "that poor Mr. Fairfax will enjoy the living.!"

"Why no, I don't think he wou'd, if this news is true—but sure folks say, the doctor wo'n't accept on't—and for that matter why shou'd

thou'd he—for he has not the least trouble now, as he never preaches above once a year—and that is when his lordship comes to town."

"Does Mr. Fairfax, then, do all the duty?" rejoined Terentia.

"Oh, yes!" the doctor's too corpulent, folks say, to *preach*; besides, he enjoys himself with his bottle, very often, till the people are coming home from church—and what should he do else—why should he trouble himself about religion, when he allows Mr. Fairfax a *matter of fifty pounds a year* to take all that off his hands!"

"And pray," said Terentia, "what may be the doctor's income?"

"Why folks say, 'tis a matter of eight hundred a year—but then he had a power of money with his wife—Well, and so he had need, for he keeps a carriage and four livery servants, and lives for all the world like a lord—yes—no lord in the land need live better—and my Kitty has many a ride with madam Sperry—I promise you—though I live here in this little hut—and the doctor, for that matter—*since Kitty's good fortune*, bows very civilly whenever he meets me:—he is such a comely gentleman—and always looks so merry—that it does ones heart good to look at him:—but as to that there Fairfax—he does nothing but walk about with his arms folded—and often runs against folks before he sees them;—as to laughing, I don't believe he knows how—for I have known him these seven years—and his face is always just like that there picture"—(pointing to a penny print,

print, which was meant to represent a person in distress.)

Terentia had heard enough to make her wish for an acquaintance with a family whose misfortunes bore so just a resemblance to her own; and being tired with the loquacity of her hosts, she desired to be left alone, in order to solace herself with a book—a small number of which Mrs. Mountaign had furnished her with.

The next day she wrote an account to Mrs. Bryant of all that had passed, since the reception of her last letter; begging her to run no risk on her account in displeasing Sir Paulet, but believe her innocent, and trust her to that Providence which hovers over the head of those individuals who undeservedly incur the censure of a malignant world!

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The calmness of the next morning (for it was one of those when the *keen hoar frost* animates our spirits, and gives new vigour to the languid nerves) tempted her to walk in the adjacent field.

When the mind is without real objects to entertain it—it sedulously endeavours to find out ideal ones, to fill up the void which the loss of society leaves in the breast—Thus Terentia found an imaginary companion in the lovely sparrow which hopped alternate on the unrobed sprig—and the attention of a small spaniel recalled to her mind all her former friendship.—“ Ah!” cried she, “ where
 now

now is the most amiable of men?—can the gay lady Belinda restore to him that peace which this unhappy form, I fear, has wounded?—What would I give to know that he tastes that felicity which he so justly deserves!"

She now turned, and observed the spaniel had left her—"Ah! then, emblem of my every joy, how transient is that satisfaction which thy seeming sagacity afforded me!—but thou, perhaps, art in possession of a friend; and, unlearned in the treachery of human nature, art too grateful to fly from his fostering hands."

The appearance of a tall thin gentleman, whose dress and manner convinced her it could be no other than Mr. Fairfax, interrupted her soliloquy; but she was disappointed in her hopes of forming an acquaintance, when with a blush he hastily passed her, and hurried into the adjacent inclosure.

This little incident so impressed her with the idea of being thought an accomplice in the insult he had received from Mrs. Swinton, that her steps involuntarily followed, in order to undeceive him, and relate her own troubles, in hopes of meeting sympathy from a family whose misfortunes had created, in the highest degree, that power in her breast.

In getting over the stile, her foot slipped; and in endeavouring to save herself from falling, a nail caught her ankle, and she now gave up all thoughts of an interview, as the pain from the wound was too severe to suffer her to proceed, and she was walking home much chagrined and disappointed, when

Mrs.

Mrs. Swinton appeared, and told her daughter was *com'd* on purpose to see her.

This news by no means compensated for her past perplexity, as the behaviour of the mother had given her a sufficient specimen of the manners she was to expect—and she would most willingly have dispensed with an interview in which she could not propose to herself either edification or entertainment; but it was by no means possible to avoid it; and she walked on, in no humour, however, to pay much attention to her loquacious companion.

Mrs. Forman was sitting, or rather squatting in an elbow chair, in a very fashionable dishabille; the awkwardness of her manner stood the more evinced by thus aping, what nothing but a certain air and grace, the offspring of an elevated education, or peculiar personal endowments, can ever become.—The prominence which graced her lips far exceeded the common size, but made her short corpulent person the more conspicuous; and the load of muslin placed on a neck which scarcely appeared two inches from her shoulders, together with her long sleeves, stretched to the utmost by her well-thriven arms, the situation of which, in whatever attitude she was in, was always projecting far distant from her waist, gave her the appearance of an effigy set up as a terror to the winged inhabitants of the sky, rather than that she sedulously endeavoured to imitate—a modern fine lady!"

"So Miss," she cried, without so much as attempting to rise from her chair, "I am vastly glad to see you; I thought mother
could

could not have found you—I assure you, I disappointed Madam Sperney of my company, because I would not appear unpolite to you—seeing, as how, you com'd from London.” She then pulled hold of her gown, admired the make, and wished Mr. Forman would let her see a place where every thing was so clever and fashionable; “but he’ll go no where,” she added, “and if any one but Doctor Sperney and his lady comes to the house, he always flies to his study, and I see no more of him till they are gone.”

“Well, well, child, suppose he does—so long as you can enjoy all the comforts of life, what need you mind?”

I don’t say against it,” said Mrs. Forman; “but he is so vapourish, that one has no sort of comfort with him—and if the candle goes out in the night, I am obliged to ring loud enough to raise the dead for another—and when it comes, he looks for all the world as if his hair stood an end.”

“Well, well, no matter which way his hair stands, so long as you can live like a lady—he may die soon—and then you may make Jonathan suffer in his turn.”

A sigh heaved from the bosom of Mrs. Forman, at the mention of Jonathan, and convinced Terentia that her sentiments did not correspond with this ideal retaliation.—After which, she turned to that young lady, and said:

“Only I know I shall never get him to see you, or I would ask you to invite me to go home with you when you return to London—for I long to see the lions—and the tower—and the monument—and all the curiosity

osity fights—and I don't believe I shall ever again have such a nice opportunity."

Happily the servant now entered with a message, desiring she would go home, as his master was tired of sitting alone.

"I dare say now," she said, "he'll be so odd, he won't suffer me to ask you to come to our house—he is so scrupulosity about strangers—and so anxiety about being seen—that one might as well be shut up in an old church, and be a companion for screech owls at once."

The curiosity which had been excited in the bosom of Terentia, with regard to the husband's character, was suspended by this pleasing intelligence, and she turned her thoughts again to the parsonage, for a relief from the company of ignorant loquacity."

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which the wheel of Fortune seems preponderating in the favour of our Heroine—a strange discovery—she leaves the cottage, and returns to London.

THE weather proving severe, Terentia employed herself alternately in working and drawing—The trees, hedges, and shrubs, being universally enrobed with snow, gave her a subject for the latter employment, of which she was very fond; and in the course of a fortnight she had finished a complete frost piece: no other incident occurred, except that a red-breast had taken shelter under her protection, and lived secure from that intense cold which destroyed many of its harmless race.

A warm rain had succeeded the frost, and some faint gleams of Sol's benign rays had turned the face of nature.—When one morning she perceived at a small distance from the house, a young lady so different from any object her eyes had beheld, that a secret hope rushed into her mind, it might probably be Miss Fairfax.; and she instantly put on her cloak, in order to meet, and, by some means, undeceive her in the opinion which she could not divest herself from supposing they harboured of her being an accomplice in the insult they had received.

Just as she entered the field, a cow having that morning been bereaved of her young,

ran furiously towards her, and so terrified her with the idea of being tossed, that she screamed aloud for help, and was near fainting, when the young lady before mentioned sprang forward to her relief, and assured her the cow was by no means vicious, but that anxiety alone for the loss she had sustained, occasioned her thus earnestly as it were to enquire for her lost offspring. Mr. Fairfax, who had from his house been a spectator of this incident, now approached :

“ I am sorry, young lady,” he said, “ that you have experienced any inconvenience from this poor disconsolate.—Alas ! poor animal, she has too much feeling to bear tamely the insult she has this morning met with from those whose hearts are not formed to be affected by that dumb eloquence with which she pleaded the cause of nature—and, like other unfortunate beings, the sad relief of shaking the iron chain of tyranny, to no purpose but to wound the heart of sympathy, and gladden those composed of harder materials, is now the only solace left her.”

“ The heart, Sir,” answered Terentia, “ must indeed be callous, that can sport with the misery of an animal in whose gesture anguish is so plainly delineated—and yet, that there are such monsters in human form, experience daily convinces us. I have often felt extreme anguish of mind from the cruelty with which I have seen a poor harmless ox treated by the rude rabble of a village green ; and have as often wondered, that the human mind could thus degenerate.”

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"It is a scandal to our nation, that such barbarity is suffered," said Mr. Fairfax; "but a little further experience will teach you, that it is but an emblem of the world in general. The ox is not more persecuted by those miscreants that surround him, than he whose poverty subjects him to the scorn of affluence; where, though refinement may conceal the basilisk, its stings are not less pointed."

"Ah! Sir," cried Terentia, "not only by theory have I already been taught this truth; dear bought experience has long infilled into my mind, that want of affluence is too often attended with the dearth of friends! yet there are many characters now existing, who are an honour to humanity; among whom the family, that at present shield me from that scorn you so feelingly point out, must ever be numbered."

They had by this time reached the parsonage, and the wishes of Terentia were gratified by a general invitation to their humble dwelling, where the absence of affluence was richly supplied by that conformity of sentiment, and unity of hearts, which were too conspicuous for the penetrating eye of Terentia to escape; and so congenial with her own notions of domestic felicity, as to make her leave them with the highest regret; and never did dependence sit more heavy on her spirits, than at this instant; it rendered her unable to chuse a place of residence where instruction and entertainment bore an equal share in filling up the social hour.

During a very pleasing conversation in an early afternoon's visit, Terentia found her new friend Sophia had received a very liberal education;

education; that her genius for poetry was unconfined, that her knowledge in literature was much beyond her years; and that her temper was amiable, yet free from that excessive timidity which very often proves disadvantageous (though by no means a proof of simplicity) to those who unfortunately possess it.

The Fairfax's were no less gratified with this acquisition to their pleasures; and the worthy divine entrusted her with enough of his affairs to convince her too well of the truth of Mrs. Swinton's sarcasms, with this addition, that he was no favourite with the doctor; and by several hints which he dropped, she found, that avarice, which is too often the characteristic of our overgrown clergy, was the reigning principle of Doctor Sperney.

In this agreeable connection Tercentia had passed some weeks, when one evening as Mr. Fairfax was reading some favourite poems, while the ladies were employed at their needles, the servant of Mr. Forman was announced.—He brought a message from his master, desiring to see him immediately and alone.

The good divine obeyed the summons; but, by the time he arrived, Mr. Forman had altered his mind, and sent word that his spirits were now too low to admit him, but that he would esteem it as a favour, if he would call in the morning. The servant made an apology for the inconsistency of his master's behaviour, alleging the disorder of his mind was at times so predominant over his reason, that the idea of seeing spectres had more

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than once possessed him; and that in his opinion he was little better than a lunatic.

With this strange account, Mr. Fairfax returned to the ladies, and asked Terentia whether he ever visited the mother of his wife?

Terentia repeated what she had heard from Mrs. Forman; who, she added, appeared to be much chagrined that his ideas were so contracted; and sadly regretted his pointed dislike to see any company: the subject was then dropped, and soon after she returned to the cottage.

On her entrance there, she found Mrs. Forman very deeply engaged in discourse with her mother.

"I never," said Mrs. Swinton, in answer to what appeared a complaint, "saw the like; I would not take on so for the best husband in the world; let him die, I say, so long as he can't carry his riches with him; 'tis nothing but a fit of childishness—I dare say he will not be long for this world—the bell tolled as heavy as lead, when foreman Robins was buried; and neighbour Swan's child was as limp as your gauze handkerchief;—but you never mind what I say—you know I have a foreknowledge of every thing—you know I *prognosticated* the death of old Brindle the very day she was put into the clover ground."

"I cannot," rejoined the daughter, "sleep with a mad man—and if you won't go and sit in the room, I am sure I won't go to bed—I was frightened enough last night with his *fegaries*. I am sure I trembled every limb of me, when he slunk down, and covered himself with the bed-cloaths, by reason he was so anxiety about a ghost—and as to being scrupolosity

scrupolosity about Miss Sackville, why she can sleep in the green-room, and he will know nothing about it."

They both looked at Terentia for an answer, whose humanity would not suffer an inconvenience to herself to interfere with a desire of obliging the distressed, though she determined to write to Mrs. Mountaign, and endeavour to obtain her consent to take up her future residence at the parsonage; having already recommended the good divine to the notice of that worthy family, and had likewise been favoured with an answer, that every effort would be put in force among his numerous acquaintance to get him preferred.

With this resolution she reached the house of Mr. Forman. She was at first shewn into the parlour, but that gentleman having (as was his custom) sent the servant to see if the coast was clear, Terentia was obliged to retire to the green-room before-mentioned; which as it joined that in which they themselves slept, she dreaded being disturbed with the strangeness of his disorder, as it was in the night that his fits were most perceptible.

The strangeness of the bed, and perhaps some reflections of a different kind, kept her waking until the hour of twelve, when she dropped into a sweet sleep; and the form of Grovesby, released from those chains which at present bound him, appeared to her view: she was busied in an hundred enquiries how all those things had come to pass, when the voice of Bankerton, vibrating through her soul, converted every idea into another channel, by the following soliloquy:

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"Worthy

"Worthy Hatfield! much injured orphan! to what distress may not my villainy have reduced you; yet spare me, Sackville; I have not, will not use the money which you thought intrusted to better hands! Spare me, thou grisly phantom: if your lovely offspring yet exists, I will restore it."

Horror, hope, and fear alternately reigned in the bosom of Terentia, from a discovery so strange and unexpected. That he had purloined from the property of Mr. Hatfield, she had never doubted; but to secrete, as it was now evident he had done, the cash remitted by her father, without the knowledge of Mr. Hatfield, appeared quite an enigma. With anxious expectation, therefore, she waited the coming morn; when she strayed into the garden, the gate of which led into the field, before any one, except the servants were stirring; and on the wings of high-raised expectation arrived at the parsonage, just as Mr. Fairfax descended the stair-case. She related as briefly as possible what she had heard; and by his advice wrote immediately to Mr. Bryant, begging his assistance in a matter of so much importance to her future establishment; after which she returned to the lodge, resolving, under pretence of accompanying Mrs. Forman, to leave it no more until she was restored to that property she had thus feloniously been robbed of.

As Mr. Bryant had taken a post-chaise the moment he received the letter, he was at the parsonage before the close of the next evening from that on which this discovery was made; and he, together with Mr. Fairfax, reached the house of Bankerton by six the
next

next morning: and the former having informed the woman he had a recipe, which would entirely eradicate those kind of disorders, he was shewn into the room in which Terentia was sitting, whose joy, on seeing her long absent friend, was not abated by the hope of soon having it in her power to return, with gratitude, the favours she had already received.

The mother, who was desired to draw him into a conversation, in order that the supposed gentleman of the faculty might the better investigate his disease, enquired "how he had rested."

"I shall never rest again," he answered; "I am haunted with mid-night spies, which torture me with their predictions that I shall soon be cut off from every earthly joy."

"You must compose yourself, Sir, you must compose yourself; I can't imagine what has filled your head with such odd *vagaries*; I never saw any thing like you—you are like one possessed; I wish you would let me go to the wise man; mayhap he could cure you."

"If," answered Bankerton, "you say a word to the wise man; or any other man about me, I'll turn you both out of doors: would you bring me to the gal—— he stopped; and Mr. Bryant now stepped forth, and drawing the curtain aside, said,

"Restore, villain, the property of this injured orphan; and your age may perhaps save you from that prosecution you so much dread, and which you so richly deserve."

"Ah!" answered Bankerton, looking furiously at his wife, "is it thus you betray me?"

“No trifling,” cried Mr. Bryant, “restore the cash which you last night promised, in the hearing of Miss Sackville, to her father; or you instantly change your residence for that of the county gaol, where that punishment you have so long deserved awaits you; and tell me, without further equivocation, to what does it amount; how long you have been possessed of it; and if Mr. Sackville lives?”

“The sum, Sir,” cried the trembling miscreant, “is twenty thousand pounds, which I received in India bonds the evening on which I left the best of masters, with a letter to the deceased; it was the last Mr. Sackville wrote, and was delivered, by his desire, after his death, which happened six months before I received it. This, Sir, is the truth; I own I deserve no clemency; yet did you know the torture of a burthened conscience, the goodness of a heart like your’s would pity as well as condemn the frailties of a truly wretched man.”

“Restore instantly the money, and fly a country where justice allows not partiality to villainy such as this,” said Mr. Bryant, “lest your injustice gets wind, and in that case we cannot screen you from the rigour of the law.”

Bankerton arose, and, after much labour, took up a board, under which he had hid the notes; and with trembling hands restored them to Terentia; whose bosom, even at the moment when passions might have been excused, and revenge justified, still glowed with humanity; and she enquired to what this restoration of her property had reduced him.

“Ah,”

"All," he answered, "that I can justly call my own, is fifteen hundred pounds. These," giving some papers from his bureau, "are the property of my late master's creditors: and now suffer me, thus on my knees, to hope for pardon from the lips of her I have so cruelly injured; that once granted, I trust heaven will forgive me, and compose my bewildered intellects."

"You have it," said Terentia; "but where is the letter you received from my father?"

Bankerton turned pale as he acknowledged that to prevent a discovery he had committed it to the flames. "But this," said he, taking from an inner drawer, a small miniature, "is providentially preserved."

It was the likeness of Mr. Sackville, and Terentia placed it in her bosom; but finding that Bankerton had sufficient to support himself and wife in that sphere of life in which they were born, and thinking that an application to business would be a better security against temptation, than a life of leisure, she gave up all thought of returning a small part, as she at first intended; judging it to be an abuse of heaven's goodness to herself to support in affluence a person so unprincipled, and who had been so devoid of gratitude to the best of masters.

They now returned to the parsonage; where, after a day spent in rejoicing at an event in which all parties were likely to be the happier, Mr. Bryant set off to acquaint his second self that a short period of time would bring the grateful Terentia to her arms; while that young lady employed her-

self in writing an account of her unexpected good fortune to Mrs. Mountaign promising to call in her way to Bryant-hall, and spend a few days with that benevolent family.

Her next wish was to set above the world the worthy Fairfax; but as she doubted not the strenuous exertions of Mr. Mountaign in his favour, she contented herself with presenting him with a small sum for his present exigencies.

Calmed by the sunshine of prosperity, and cheered by the luxuriant idea of the good she should be enabled to do—in a week after she left a place, which on her first entrance had promised her nothing but discomfort; but from which she had now derived two of the greatest blessings of life—independence, and a true friend—Ah! thought she (as she waved a last adieu to Sophia) how causeless did I lament the evils that occasioned my journey to this place; and how little do the weak opticks of humanity perceive the clue that guides it!

CHAPTER XIX.

*A lover—a newsmonger—a combat, in which
Friendship appears triumphant over her sister
Affection.*

TERENTIA was congratulated with the utmost sincerity by her friends in Hanover-square, on the fortunate event which had taken place since they last parted ; but the lady of that hospitable mansion, who had a real affection for Terentia, could not think of parting with her at so short a period as that which she had set for her present visit ; she therefore, previous to her coming, had written and obtained the promise of Mrs. Bryant's company ; and Terentia experienced an agreeable surprise when three days after as they were set down to dinner, the arrival of that dear friend added much to her present happiness, and gave her an opportunity of expressing that gratitude, which on all occasions seemed to flow spontaneously from her heart.

Different sensations agitated her bosom a few days after, when Mr. Conyers was announced. His ambiguous language, joined to the secret spring from whence his attention to her welfare had arisen, convinced her he could be no less than the bosom friend of Grovelby, and consequently entrusted with the knowledge of his unfortunate attachment ; a sigh at the unpleasing recollection escaped her, while a crimson of the deepest

die tinged her cheek, as she introduced him to Mrs. Bryant, as the gentleman who had rescued her from impending ruin.

The mind of Conyers was still more untr tranquil; the report of her good fortune had reached him, and marred every rising hope which had, from the marriage of Grovelby, taken place in his breast. He strove to be himself, but in vain; he faltered in his accents as he congratulated her on it, and was unable to answer the several questions she had put concerning Mr. Burdet, and lady Ashton—wished he had denied himself this last *luxury* of seeing her, and condemned a conduct which he could not alter.

From a situation truly distressing, he was in some measure relieved by the arrival of Miss Hambleton, who now entered, and told Mrs. Mountaign that she was quite tired with her morning's ramble. After which she enquired if she had heard news respecting lady Bab Wingly.

Mrs. Mountaign answered in the negative, and she proceeded :

“ Lord, ma'am, how strange it is you never hear any thing;—why, I thought every body had known it; it is full three days since my maid heard it from her ladyship's woman, and I am sure I was quite petrified with the very idea of such treatment. Do you know, that wretch, Benson, leaves her for a week together; and takes no notice at all about any thing but his pleasure !”

“ I am exceedingly sorry,” said Mrs. Mountaign, “ though not equally surprisèd—what could her ladyship expect, from so imprudent

dent a proceeding?—When was you at Wingly-place?”

“La, ma’am, not since I paid the bride visit—what signifies distressing ones self with hearing nothing in the world but complaints. Do you know her ladyship is more melancholy now, than when her daughter first left her?”

“And is that the reason why she is to be abandoned by her friends?” said Mrs. Bryant, in a tone of astonishment.

“An established maxim, I assure you,” said Mr. Mountaign; “the feelings of our modern fine ladies are by much too refined to endure the voice of misery, even in those who act by the same principle with themselves—to fly from affliction, and check the small remains of nature in the human mind, by scenes of amusement, is *now* the only fashionable mode of serving *our friends*—and this, I assure you, is called tonish philosophy.”

“It is a philosophy,” said Mrs. Bryant, “so ill adapted to the dignity of the human understanding, and incongruous to that true delicacy, and feminine sweetness which ought to characterize every female mind, that I trust it has not many converts to its system.”

Miss Hambleton, who, during this comment, had been employed in admiring a new morning dress which Mrs. Mountaign wore, now resumed the thread of her discourse.

“Well, ma’am, but I have forgot to tell you that Mrs. Raby, Miss Wingly that was, had humbled herself so far as to beg pardon of her mother; and that Benson had ordered her to be sent from the door—you can’t imagine how distressed she was—only you know
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it is not so well to interfere in family feuds, or I should—for I had a great mind, I assure you, to ask her to stay a few days with us, she looked so very wretched.”

“Is she then destitute of support?” answered Terentia, whose bosom glowed with the idea of rescuing her from her present distress.

“La, yes, ma’am; why the fellow has nothing in the world but twenty pounds a year for attending the school, to subsist on—his vanity is finely humbled, ha, ha!—He thought of gracing Lady Bab’s carriage, but he is mistaken; though I am vastly sorry for my poor young friend; we were once very intimate.”

“Did she come directly from Wingly-place,” said Mrs. Mountaign, “when she informed you of this inhuman reception?”

“Yes, ma’am, and I am sure my heart ached to see her; you can’t imagine how she lamented her hard fate, as she termed it. I should most certainly have invited her to stay a day or two, but I had some thoughts of going to the Opera; and then you know it would have been extremely rude to have appeared languid and queer, and that I should certainly have done; for you can’t conceive how extremely I was hurt to see an old school fellow in such an unhappy situation.”

“I dare say,” cried Mr. Mountaign, “your grief was excessive; I wonder you did not endure an electrical shock, by way of exhilarating your depressed spirits.”

“Lord, Sir, what ideas! do you suppose my nerves are a compound of iron, that I could

could condescend to aey thing so monstrous barbarous?"

"Oh no," answered Mrs. Bryant, "the gentleman could not be guilty of so palpable a mistake, when you have given such convincing demonstration that your whole frame is a compound of *tender sensibility* and *god-like philanthropy*;

Regardless of satire, or the opinion of the world, and eager to indulge a propensity to newsmongering, she turned from that lady, unhurt by her reproof, and addressing Mrs. Mountaign, asked her if she had yet visited Lady Belinda Grovesby.

Mrs. Mountaign answered in the affirmative, glancing an eye at Terentia, whose face expressed an emotion she vainly strove to hide.

"Well, ma'am, and how do you like her choice?" interrogated Miss Hambleton. I think him the oddest creature I ever saw—he is so absent you can't imagine, and so horridly stupid, that I don't believe I should like him at all."

"Then," said Mr. Mountaign "you would make a very fashionable pair; for I am much mistaken if Mr. Grovesby would not return that compliment with interest."

"Perhaps so," answered she bridling with contempt; "if, as I hear is the case, he parted with his affections before he gave me his hand. Well, I wonder what could possess her ladyship to marry him; I am sure, from what I hear, she had better relinquished her claim."

"I have no doubt," said Mrs. Bryant greatly hurt that so much had been said in the presence of Terentia) "but the affection
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of her ladyship, joined with the prudence of Mr. Grovelby, will render them comparatively happy: to be completely so, is not the lot of humanity."

"La, ma'am, how can she be happy, when all the world sees his regard for her is but mere pretence? I am sure, if I was her ladyship, I would have no such sycophants under my roof as Miss Musgrove."

"Miss Musgrove!" reiterated Mrs. Mountaign, in accents of surprise.

"Why la, ma'am," interrupted Miss Hambleton, "don't you know that it was through the machinations of that flirt, that Mr. Grovelby deserted a sweet creature, who is since gone off with Lord Ashton—it is no secret, I assure you, but well known to all the domestics that she is and has long been distractedly in love with Mr. Grovelby, and nobody scruples to say, that it was with a design to set them at variance, that she has taken such pains to gain the friendship of lady Belinda—though her ladyship is so exceedingly infatuated with her supposed merits, that if any one was to endeavour to undeceive her, I dare say she would not believe one word of the matter."

"No one who is sensible of Mr. Grovelby's true sentiments," cried Mrs. Bryant, "will ever credit that he has a partiality for a character so dissimilar to his own—Miss Musgrove may be imprudent—but Grovelby can never be unjust."

Mr. Conyers, tenacious for the character of Terentia (who had taken an opportunity to withdraw from a conversation in which she was

was too much interested) now turned to Miss Hambleton, and said,

“ I must beg leave to undeceive you, madam, with regard to one aspersion which you have thought proper to bestow on my friend. The young lady you allude to was too justly regarded by Mr. Groveby, to meet the fate you hint at for him; and far superior to all the low arts of Ashton, to deserve the calumny you have attempted to brand her with.”

During this speech Miss Hambleton played with her fan, and looked extremely silly; perhaps for the moment she determined to be more cautious of retailing scandal.—For with much confusion, she answered,

“ I am sorry, Sir, I have offended you—I am perhaps mistaken—I declare I repeated no more than I heard; and if it is not true, I sincerely beg the lady’s pardon; for though unknown to me, I should be sorry to wound her fame. Lady Ashton’s woman, however, told it to Miss Grenville’s Ann, and she informed my Jenny—but if it is a mistake, I am sorry I said any thing about it;—I am always remarkably *cautious* of traducing people’s characters—it is certainly the cruellest thing in nature; and I am determined to order Jenny to get a clearer light into this matter—though I never yet found her mistaken.”

She then turned to Mrs. Mountaign, and desired the company of herself and friend, at her next rout; after which, pretending to recollect an appointment with a young lady, she hurried to her carriage, leaving Conyers a prey to the corroding torments which wound the heart of that man whose poverty appears a barrier even to the hopes of succeeding
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with the woman on whom his fondest affections are placed.

Hurt by the mortifying aspersions which had been cast on her character, Terentia would gladly have been excused joining the company; but Mrs. Mountaign would by no means suffer her to indulge that melancholy which the redness of her eyes too plainly evinced had taken possession of her heart: and after doing all in her power to dissuade her from noticing a report which would soon be obliterated by her future conduct and appearance in the world, the latter of which she judged (as she said) highly necessary to render its fallacy more obvious, she ventured to speak of Conyers in terms of the highest approbation—indeed, my dear, she added, he deserves, and I hope will meet with a return to an affection as disinterested, as I am sure it will be permanent.

Terentia was too well convinced of the friendship of Mrs. Mountaign, to admit a doubt of the justness of her advice, and replied,

“ I am far from insensible, dearest madam, to the merits of Mr. Conyers, nor am I blind to that affection which beams from a countenance in which is displayed the emblem of a heart replete with the tenderest sensibility:—yet though I esteem him, it is all I can do; and while my treacherous heart baffles every effort to conquer a passion for another, however I may wish to act the undisguised friend to Mr. Conyers, surely you cannot advise me to risk his happiness, by giving him my hand under such circumstances.”

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“ The prudence of a mind like yours, my dear, cannot fail rendering affection so conspicuous as that of Mr. Conyers, all the felicity he deserves ; in consulting his happiness, I have no doubt but your own will be lasting.”

They now dropped the subject and returned to the parlour, but the traces of sorrow still appeared in the eye of Terentia. Conyers observed it, and was still more wretched—a tear of real anguish gushed from his eye, as he again regretted his want of that fortune which could now make his affections appear disinterested ; and in the utmost despondency he was about to take his leave, when Mrs. Mountain insisted on his spending the day with them, and escorting them to lady O——’s rout in the evening ; and Terentia, struck with his emotion, involuntarily joined in the request.

The eye of Conyers glistened with sensibility at a condescension at once so unlooked for, and so gratifying ; but when meek-eyed poverty, with its gloomy train glided across his mind—the hand which had raised itself to press to his lips that of hers whose voice had cheered his drooping spirits, sunk languid from its pursuit, and refused to do its office.

A ride in the park had before been proposed ; and, under pretence of getting their hats, the two ladies now left the room ; and Terentia, unable to invent an excuse for so doing (hers being already on) felt herself awkwardly situated, and at a loss for a subject that might serve to dispel the excessive embarrassment with which Conyers seemed oppressed.

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The distress, however, of the unhappy Mrs. Raby soon helped her to one, and she asked him if he had ever seen, or was acquainted with that family.

He answered, "that Lady Bab Wingly and his mother had formerly been acquainted, but, for reasons unknown to himself, the intercourse between the families had before her death subsided."

Terentia was expressing her wishes to bring about a reconciliation between those parties, or by some means save the unfortunate fair one from impending poverty, when Mr. Conyers caught her hand.

"Ah! madam," he cried, "why am I cursed with its gripe? why am I not on a level with the only woman on earth that can give me felicity?"

The ladies' return prevented a reply, which would in all probability have been more favourable to the distressed Conyers than he expected; for never had the susceptible mind of Terentia experienced so great a desire to submit to the judgment of her friends as at that moment; and her mind, during her ride, was totally occupied in reflections which rather increased, than diminished, her present prepossession in his favour.

CHAPTER XX.

A walk in the Park—Friendly interposition—An act of charity—and a disagreeable rencontre.

SOON after they entered the Park, Mrs. Mountaign mentioned her intention of calling on Lady Bab Wingly. This so exactly corresponded with the wish of Terentia, that she begged, if it was not improper to accompany her.

"By no means, my dear," she answered, "we will try our united force to restore tranquillity to the poor Mrs. Kerby. Lady Bab is not naturally of a bad disposition; her indiscretions have chiefly arisen from too great conformity to modern manners, rather than from a want of maternal affection. I can hardly imagine she herself was accessory to the calumny which Miss Hambleton has just circulated among her acquaintance.

After setting down Mrs. Bryant and Mr. Conyers, in the Birdcage-walk, the two ladies proceeded on their visit of mediation.

They found her ladyship in her dressing-room, attended by Mr. Benson, who appeared by his dress, to be just returned from a morning ride.

Lady Bab upbraided Mrs. Mountaign of unkindness, in staying so long from her house.

That lady answered,—that she had waited to hear the desirable news of a reconciliation taking place between her ladyship and Mrs. Kerby,

Kerby, and was now come as a petitioner in behalf of that misguided young lady.

Her ladyship shook her head—cast an eye on Mr Benson—and burst into tears.

“Surely,” continued Mrs. Mountaign, who now perceived the real cause from whence the supposed disaffection arose, as the tender mother was too strongly depicted in the countenance of lady Bab, to admit of a doubt of her lenity, “you will not suffer the only child of the late lord Wingly to want the common necessaries of life! She has acted imprudently in marrying without your consent, I’ll allow; but let me entreat your ladyship, not to justify her in any further deviation from rectitude, by withdrawing a protection so necessary to her future establishment. If the man is worthy, your family and connections will gain him respect.—Merit,” glancing an eye at Mr. Benson, “in *your own* opinion, has out-weighed mercenary views. Let not a child reflect, that she is driven from the arms of a mother, by acting the very part she herself has performed.”

Had Mrs. Mountaign touched on any other string—all her persuasions had been in vain—but, such is the propensity of the human mind, however unworthy, to be thought virtuous—and so pleasing, at this instant, was that idea to Benson, who till this moment had strongly opposed a reconciliation, that he now thanked Mrs. Mountaign for her kind interposition, and assured her it was what he had long wished for.

The eyes of lady Bab were expressive of grateful sensibility for this piece of friendship; and Mrs. Mountaign having gained her

her point, after saying she should be happy to congratulate them in person whenever friendship again subsisted between them, took her leave—while Terentia, not less gratified by their success, experienced a tide of joy when the ideal meeting presented itself—nor would the glad tear be suppressed.

They found on their return to the Park, that Miss Hambleton had joined their party.

“So, Ma’am!” she cried, the moment they approached, “you have been to see poor Lady Bab—I declare, I had some thoughts of calling there myself—but I have met with a misfortune that has rendered me quite miserable. Do you know I have lost poor Pompey!—I ordered him last night some fricasee of veal sweetbreads, for his stomach has always been too delicate for common nourishment—and that careless huffy, my cook, I suppose, seasoned it too high—for when I returned home to change my dress, after I left you, I found the poor creature so ill, that I really thought him dead. And though I sent for Surgeon W——, who, you know, on all occasions attended our family, and offered him fifty guineas to save his life, he would not come; because, truly a nasty negro fellow (who could not pay him a farthing for his trouble) had just fallen from a scaffold and fractured his scull—as if the sweet little creature was not of more consequence than such a wretch as that!”

“The deed,” cried a voice, the utterer of which was invisible, “will be recorded in heaven! but whether the book set apart for that purpose will have a similar deposit, I know not? Though that in which the abuse
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of money is set down, will doubtless be filled to the margin. Oh! shameful luxuriousness! and strange dispensation of events! that the dogs of the affluent should thus be gorged with dainties, which the indigent human being, never so much as dreams of!"

The justness of the rebuke, caused the company to turn back in search of the speaker; when to the no small surprise of Terentia, her old acquaintance, the hospitable man to whom she was indebted for her breakfast on the morning she left Bryant Hall, seated with his little Toby under a spreading elm, appeared to her view.

"Ah!" she cried, as she approached the venerable sage, "do I again see my kind host! and see him too at a time when I can thus" taking from her pocket ten guineas, "repay his hospitality! Purchase with this some raiment that better becomes the dignity of your mind!"

She then gave him her address, resolving to rescue him from a situation so much below what he appeared to deserve—and so *incongruous* to his age, and those silver hairs which graced his venerable aspect, and hastened from him to prevent that excess of gratitude which appeared bursting from a heart debilitated with the ruthless ravage of progressive calamity.

She then explained an enigma which had filled all present with surprise—and which was now creative of various sensations in their different minds. Mrs. Bryant, though she admired the generosity, did not instantly coincide with the largeness of the deposit.

Mrs.

—Mrs. Mountaign being sensible of the multiplicity of frauds which are daily practised in and about the metropolis, was anxious lest she should be imposed on; while Mr. Conyers, who had formed no other opinion than that the object was a proper one, was ruminating on the goodness of her heart, and lamenting his hard fate, in not being able to emulate an act so god-like. No one, however, offered to comment on the matter, till Miss Hambleton, with a face expressive of much concern, cried out;

“Lord, Ma’am, why what profusion! do you know you will never, from this instant, be able to stir without impertinence; as he will certainly inform all his crew of your benevolence; so you will doubtless have a set of vagabonds scraping and bowing wherever you set your foot—but, perhaps, you would glory in a sight so heavenly! for my part I hate ostentation!”

“Every one has their particular ideas with regard to the propriety of spending their money;” answered Terentia, a little piqued at the word ostentation. “I am quite satisfied with what I have done—and shall think myself well repaid, if my charity casts one ray of tranquility over a mind that seems formed for even an elevated situation, though at present over clouded by misery and want.”

A shower of rain now caused them to re-enter the carriage, and as they were returning home, the voice of lord Alhton much alarmed Terentia, with, “Heavens and earth, there is Miss Sackville!—How lucky, after all my endless toil to see her once again!”

“Be

"Be not alarmed, my love," said Mrs. Bryant, who had likewise heard the expression, and now saw the change in her countenance; I am extremely sorry for this *interview*, and I know of but one expedient by which you can extricate yourself from his audacious importunity."

"What! dearest Madam;" said Terentia eagerly, "I would most willingly do any thing to be free from a pursuit so disagreeable to my inclinations and so injurious to my character."

"Nothing more, my dear girl," answered that lady drily, "than to give your hand to some worthy man, whose mind is formed to make you taste that felicity you deserve. There are characters," glancing her eye on Mr. Conyers, "which I am persuaded are quite equal to the task, and who will then have a right to protect you from those insults, which in so daring an adversary, can only by such means be repelled."

Terentia, who was not aware that so pointed an expression was to follow her enquiry, coloured very high, and did not at the moment appear over wise.

"A good omen!" said Mrs. Mountaign. "Thank you Ma'am," to Mrs. Bryant, "for the means of so pleasing a discovery!"

Terentia now blushed a still deeper crimson; while the fine intelligent eyes of Conyers seemed all anxiety with internal joy!

They had now reached Hanover-square, and Terentia hurried to her room, to ruminate on an event at once so terrific, mortifying, and distressing. The advice of her friends, however repugnant to her wishes, she now considered

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considered as the only means of extricating herself from the persecution of a man whose principles had rendered him an object of detestation, and whose attendance on her person could not fail of rendering her a butt for the pointed finger of Calumny to shoot at.

CHAPTER XXI.

A conflict—An intrusion productive of much terror to our heroine—with the arrival of a Friend—and a treaty of marriage concluded.

IN this disposition of mind she returned to the parlour, where she was met by Conyers, who pleaded with such energy of expression the cause which lay next his heart, that after a hard struggle between love and discretion, she answered :

“The partiality which Mr. Conyers has long shewn me, does me the greatest honour—be assured, Sir, in return, you are in possession of my most sincere esteem—and if I could insure your happiness by the offer of my hand, believe me, I would not hesitate—but while I am a bankrupt in that passion, on which alone depends felicity in the married state—it would *in you* be the highest imprudence to accept it.”

“It would be sacrilege,” cried he in a tone of rapture, “to doubt happiness with such an angel! Blessed with your esteem, what have I to fear? Nothing,” he continued, “but that every effort to deserve such condescension, will fall far short of my intention.”

The ladies now joined them, and Conyers having informed them of his approaching felicity, it was agreed that an early marriage should take place, and that to prevent any further trouble from lord Ashton, Terentia should not appear in public till Mr. Conyers had

had a right to protect her from insult—she accordingly declined going to lady D——'s route in the evening, and wishing to spend that interval alone, she insisted that Mr. Conyers should, as it was before intended, escort the ladies to Portland-square.

In revolving in her mind all the past events of her life, and forming a plan for her future establishment, Terentia passed the first two hours of her retirement.—What further ideas would have arisen in her mind is uncertain; for the door opened, and lord Ashton, who from the moment he first caught sight of her, had set his servant to find out her place of residence, entered, intending to plead as an excuse to the family, for what he knew would be termed, cruel persecution—an insurmountable affection—and an intention of honourable treatment, by divorcing his present lady, who was still on the Continent, living in open adultery with her paramour, Standly.

Terror, scorn, and disappointment, at once flushed the countenance of Terentia. She demanded why she was thus to be persecuted?—and why thus impudently pursued? She then, without waiting for an answer, rang with violence a small bell which was so contrived as to reach the nursery, hoping, by that means, for the company of Miss Mountaign—but a few minutes convinced her, that it was to no purpose, as the child was in bed; and nurse, who had been ill some time, had taken an opiate, and was likewise in the arms of Morpheus. She then enquired for Mrs. Mountaign's woman—but unfortunately she was gone to see her sister, and was not expected home till such time as the route broke up.

When the servant was withdrawn, lord Ashton, with an air of triumph approached her :

“ Why is this lovely countenance so expressive of terror ?” he cried, “ and why is affection like mine, treated with such scorn ?—I find I am uncommonly lucky to night—and that my stars shine propitious to my wishes ! thus, catching her in his arms, and saluting her with fervour, let me shew a regard that will be as lasting as life, and which is by far too great to be trifled with ! Nay ! look not so averse to my honourable intentions—for such they are, and shall continue. Return but my affection, and a divorce shall instantly take place—in order that I may, with justice, be intitled to call such a blessing mine !”

“ Never !” cried Terentia, with more spirit than he expected to find her possessed of.

“ I would not join myself with such an unprincipled profligate for the universe.”

“ Then,” answered his lordship with equal scorn, “ I know what I have to trust to, and will proceed accordingly.”

He had during this interval drawn her too far from the bell, had her terror suffered her to have applied to it for relief from his rude grasp. She was however in no condition to rescue herself, for being quite frightened at his manner, she sunk into a chair, and in accents which would have melted a heart less obdurate than his, was beseeching him to leave her, when the door opened a second time, and her good angel, in the form of Grovesby, entered the room.

Unconscious

Unconscious of her return, yet fully convinced by Mrs. Mountaign of her innocence, he had strolled out in order to inform himself concerning the rumour which had reached him, of the restitution of her fortune. What then must be his sensations, when, on opening the door, he perceived her seated in the above position; while Ashton, with an air of defiance, seemed bent on taking this opportunity to perpetrate his villianous designs.

"What is it I see!" said he, "Miss Sackville! and in tears too!"

Terentia sprung involuntarily towards him,—while Ashton fiercely said:

"Sir, I thank you not for this intrusion—this lady and myself could have found the means of a reconciliation without your interference."

"Your lordship," said Grovesby, "would wish me to infer from this—that you are on *good* terms with this lady—but such a countenance can never be capable of deceit; and you, my lord, have endeavoured to blast in the world's eye, a character you ought to revere!—Say, Miss Sackville, is my presence necessary to protect you from insult?"

"If the least remains of that friendship with which you once honoured me, still exists for a wretched orphan—If, as I ever thought, the love of virtue reigns predominant in your bosom, leave me not with the vilest of men—who with a heart darker than the midnight wanderer who plunders for his daily subsistence, has meanly watched the absence of the family, to insult one who equally detests and scorns him."

"Your own heart, my lord—the cause of humanity—the future peace of this amiable woman—all conspire to make it necessary that you combat with this destructive passion, and see her no more !"

"And who, Sir," cried Ashton, fiercely, "gave *you* authority to protect *her*, or insult *me*.—Lady Belinda, I trust will think this interference much to the honour of your pretended virtue."

To this pointed sarcasm, Grovelby replied:

"This interference, my lord, was merely accidental. I had heard a rumour of this lady's being restored to that affluence which villiany had long deprived her of—and it was with an intent to enquire into the truth of the matter, that I waited on Mrs. Mountain, not knowing Miss Sackville was a resident here.—May I, Madam," turning to Terentia, "congratulate you on this occasion."

"You may, Sir," she answered, "but if affluence cannot protect me from the lawless pursuit of an abandoned libertine, the felicity occasioned me by such an acquisition, will be poor indeed !"

Lord Ashton, petrified at finding her independent—with much embarrassment stammered out :

"Had I known, Madam, the change in your fate, I should most certainly have spared you this *interview*;—but as my intentions were *then* honourable, I hope you will forgive this intrusion; and suffer me when intitled by the laws of my country to make you an offer of my hand, to visit you again."

"Have

“ Have I not always shewn the utmost aversion to your ill-placed passion, my lord ;” answered Terentia, “ how then can you hope for a renewal of an acquaintance which has so much injured me in the eyes of the world ? All I desire in return for the injury you have done me, is, a promise, that you never again intrude yourself into my presence.”

“ ’Tis well, Madam !” he cried, piqued at the contempt with which she treated him ; but as he judge it would be equally distressing to *delicacy like yours*, to be left alone, at this late hour, with one married man, as another, I shall not go alone. Lord Ashton never yet submitted to an insult of this kind—and curse me if your virtuous friend shall thus triumph over me with impunity. Remember, Madam, I once more declare that my intentions were honourable.—And now, Sir,” turning to Mr. Grovelby, “ I am ready to attend you where ever you please.”

The fierceness of his manner terrified Terentia ; the idea of a duel rushed into her mind, and racked her with unspeakable anguish. She caught hold of Ashton, and with all the supplicative eloquence in her power, besought him not to put a final end to her appearance in the world by such an ill-judged proceeding.”

While Mr. Grovelby thus answered : “ I will not, my lord, be displeased, at what any man, irritated by disappointment, may say ; and I have too much regard for the reputation of this lady—and too much dislike to that very fashionable thing called *false honour*, to be drawn, in cool blood, into an act which the natural dignity of the human

human mind, *unbiaſſed* by pernicious example, muſt ever ſoar above."

Much more paſſed on the ſubject, but at length his lordſhip was convinced by the ſound reaſoning of his opponent, (whoſe courage, from many inſtances when abroad, could not be doubted) and confuted in that falſe bravery which diſappointment and pique had worked up in his mind—and much to the ſatisfaction of Terentia, they parted; yet not, till contrition had ſo far taken place of rancour and revenge in the mind of Aſhton, as to be productive of a promiſe never more to moleſt her.

When alone, reflection again took poſſeſſion of her mind—but it was not that all ſeducing reflection which ariſes from the far expanded thought of approaching good!—The ſcenes of calm ſunſhine which had before been predominant, *now* grew gloomy.—She could no longer trace in idea her future proſpects of domeſtic felicity without a *ſigh*? even the luxury ſhe might taſte from cheering the humble cottager, and his numerous offſpring, did not create that elatiſc joy which her ſuſceptible heart had before experienced. In ſhort, the entrance of Grovelby had deranged every idea, and inſpired her with a wiſh to run from herſelf.

For this purpoſe ſhe aroſe to try the power of muſic, and the following words riſing involuntarily to her lips, ſhe touched the keys and repeated them :

Grant me, juſt Heaven, a calm repoſe,
Exempt from folly, ſtrife, and pride;
Where I may pity human woes,
And taſte the pleaſures you provide.

And

And if I might select a friend
 To be the partner of my care,
 Let Grovesby this retreat attend,
 Whose merit does my heart ensnare.

Why was I born to taste distress?
 Why did I meet so kind a friend?
 My gratitude has hurt my peace;
 And but in death's cold grave will end.

Come, bless'd religion, calm my grief,
 And help me in this arduous task:
 Send fortitude to my relief;
 Ah! this, great God, is all I ask.

She had but just time to finish this solo, when the company returned; and finding now that her heart was too little in her own power, even to be capable for more than a friendship for Conyers, she would have given her whole fortune to have been free from her present engagement. Resolving, therefore, to reveal its treachery, she related all that had passed in his absence—offered to share her fortune with him as a brother—but contended much for a single life; declaring, that while her present prepossession remained unconquered—freedom alone could afford her felicity.

To this the whole trio objected—Conyers feared nothing from a want of affection in a bosom where virtue, prudence, justice, and humanity, reigned predominant—nor would her friends admit an idea of any dark veiled misfortune arising from such an union, which was, as they said, as necessary to confute the

false aspersions thrown out by lord Ashton and his servants, as it was to that of turning her thoughts from an object on whom she could not *now* think but with criminality.

Overpowered by arguments so convincing, and starting at the last mentioned apprehension, she held out her hand to Mrs. Bryant, and said :

If Mr. Conyers can be happy with this wretched person, whose mind cannot, all deserving as he is, so far conquer itself as to regard him with an eye of affection, I will not farther hesitate—yet blame not these tears—they feel like the tribute of departed joy—for should I render so worthy a heart as that which glows in the breast of my friend unhappy—felicity will never again reach the bosom of Terentia.”

The gentle soul of Conyers melted at the solemnity of a speech which at once shewed the goodness of her heart, and the little hold he had in her affections—and he was on the point to comply with her desire in giving her up, when Mr. Mountaign entered, and being informed of lord Ashton’s perseverance, insisted on giving her away the next morning.

To this Terentia gave an absolute denial—but agreed to be his on the Thursday in the following week ; and as this was Friday evening, the rest of the interval between that and the hour of rest, was dedicated to planning the manner of the wedding.

Mrs. Bryant pleaded strongly to have it solemnized at Bryant Hall, and Terentia, who wished to have it as private as possible joined in the request—it was therefore concluded, that they should reach that place on Wednesday

day evening; and that as spring was now returning, the house of the late Mr. Hatfield, which Terentia had purchased of one of his creditors on the re-assumption of her fortune, should be put in order for their reception; and that as many of the old servants as could be collected, should now be engaged in their former stations.

In the midst of this variety of events, Terentia forgot not to fulfil her promise to the old traveller; a little cot, adjacent to her estate at Hatfield Grove, she made his future residence; and complied with his request in giving him the charge of her poultry, &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which an unexpected revolution in the fate of our heroine takes place—and a new character is introduced.

NOTHING material happened till they arrived at Bryant Hall, where Terentia had the satisfaction to find many of her faithful domestics assembled to bid her welcome to the residence of her infant years—this grateful tribute of their affection was requited by a present of five pounds each, and an order to replace themselves in their former stations.

When summoned to breakfast the next morning, she was agreeably surprised to find seated, ready equipped for the sacred office, Mr. Fairfax ; and on desiring to know how, in so short a time, he could have been able to reach them, he modestly replied :

“ I come, Madam, by the desire of my kind patron,” looking at Mr. Mountaign, “ who, through your kind interposition, has made me and my little family happy, by raising us above dependance on a man whose virtues are not so great as his situation requires.”

He then acquainted her that he was actually in the possession of a living which would bring him in three hundred a year. The eye of Terentia glistened with pleasure at this news, and proudly rejoicing in the thought,

thought, that she herself was the origin of that joy which beamed in the countenance of so worthy a man,—She forgot those tumults which had, during the preceding night, agitated her disconsolate spirits; and politely thanking Mr. Mountaign for his diligence in this act of humanity, began to set about a resolution to look forward to her future prospects with a more fervent hope of felicity than she had yet done.

Conyers now entered, joy animated his countenance, and love beamed from his eyes, as he approached the fair arbitress of his fate; and on one knee poured forth his gratitude for her kind obligingness, as he termed her being ready dressed for the sacred office.

Terentia was about to answer when a servant entered, and said, a gentleman just arrived from the Indies, desired to speak to her on very particular business.

She looked her wish that Mr. Bryant would accompany her to the study—He understood her meaning and followed.

Conyers changed colour; a sigh involuntarily escaped him—he trembled, yet knew not the reason—while the rest of the company was bewildered in a labyrinth of conjecture, none of which had the least tendency to the real cause of this interruption.

When Terentia and Mr. Bryant entered the study, the stranger, who was an elderly gentleman, in the language of haughty authority, demanded if her name was not Sackville?

The force of something, unexperienced before by Terentia, occasioned by the resemblance

resemblance between the stranger and the portrait given her by Bankerton, took from her all power of utterance ; while Mr. Bryant, less concerned because less interested, answered in the affirmative, and begged he would be brief in what he was going to relate, or they should be too late for that ceremony which was to give her to another.

" I am happy," replied the stranger, " that I have arrived in time, or my friend would have been cruelly disappointed." He then turned to Terentia, and taking her hand, said :

" You will doubtless be surprised to hear, after the letter *you* received, for I find Mr. Hatfield is no more, that your father yet lives !" — At the word father ! Terentia dropt on her knees and burst into tears !

Mr. Sackville, supposing that her emotion sprung rather from disappointment, than any impulse of filial affection, raised her from that position, — " No tears, child," he said, " all I desire of you is, a dutiful acquiescence to my will. — I will have no son-in-law but one of my own chusing. This gentleman has given me to understand that you are going to fling yourself away ; — but mark me, Terentia, I will be obeyed !"

Mr. Bryant now began to plead in favour of Mr. Conyers, but the old gentleman interrupted him by saying :

" Sir, you are not unacquainted, I presume, that every father has a right to dispose of his own children —"

Terentia here interrupted him, by expatiating on the paternal kindness she had received from

from Mr. Bryant, and with a fresh shower of tears, besought her father to treat him as her dearest friend!

"I have no inclination," he answered, "to be at variance with any of your friends, child,—but on the contrary, will requite their hospitality. But your present connection must be broken off! I have given that word which I never yet forfeited!"

Mr. Bryant then briefly related the state of Terentia's mind with regard to Grovelby, after which he observed, that her only chance of happiness in the married state, was to give her hand to one whose ardent affection, and gentleness of manners, could not fail in gaining her esteem—and that Mr. Conyers, whose family and character rendered him an object worthy of a connection with the first families in England, was in his opinion much more likely to make her happy, than a stranger.

"I am not," said Mr. Sackville, "much used to contest, Sir; Mr. Conyers may be a worthy man, but were he a prince, he should not have my daughter!"

"But you will not force my inclinations, Sir," cried Terentia, "if, when I see your friend, I cannot love him."

"You have no right," he replied, "to have any inclination to force—it is indelicate, for a girl like you to mention such a forward expression.—Your mother had, I believe, little inclination to me, and yet we were tolerably happy—She was a woman of sense, and knew her duty.—If I had not quite so much affection as I could have wished—every desire of my heart was gratified, through *fear*; and that, let me tell you, Sir," turning to Mr. Bryant,

Bryant, "is for any thing I know, the most desirable property in a wife."

Terentia began from this specimen of a father's disposition, to wish she had actually been the wife of Conyers, before his arrival; and Mr. Bryant, quite disgusted with his manner, sincerely regretted that recovery which the captain despaired of—and which was the reason why the supposed posthumous letter, mentioned by Bankerton, had been forwarded to England.

Mr. Conyers was now sent for, and Mr. Bryant, in as gentle a manner as friendship could dictate, disclosed the turn which the arrival of Mr. Sackville had given to his fate!

He was much hurt; and with all the energy which the most ardent affection had inspired, pleaded the strength of his passion to the old gentleman—but he pleaded in vain!

Mr. Sackville, though by no means a perfect character, was possessed of some excellent qualities; among which, was a steady adherence to keeping his word sacred; and as that word was given to a friend, whom he thought it impossible for any woman to dislike—all that he would condescend to say was, "Sir, I am not used to *contest*, I will be obeyed."

Mr. Conyers lamented an interruption so destructive to his future hopes of felicity—but finding it absolutely necessary, he called forth that philosophy to his aid which ever distinguishes the man of virtue, when supported by the rock of religion, from the vain unprincipled coxcomb, whose pride cannot stand the test of disappointment, and with more composure than could be expected,
after

after leaving Terentia his best wishes, he took leave of a place, which a few hours before, had promised him an age of bliss ! in order to visit Mr. Burdet, before he set off for the Continent, to which place he determined to go—nor would he suffer himself to write even to Grovesby, an account of this cruel disappointment, though he had apprized him of his intended nuptials.

Terentia was not more happy—she dreaded the authority of a father—and the loss of that friendly council which had ever flown from the heart of the friendly Mrs. Bryant—who, she supposed, would now consign her up to a parent, though it was evident they were by no means satisfied with his tyrannical introduction.

The day was spent in rehearsing some of the most material incidents of each others life; and Mr. Sackville, after being convinced of the obligations received from the friends of Terentia, made restitution by such valuable presents, as convinced them he was in the possession of an immensity of wealth; and that whether it *arose* from a liberality of principle, or a propensity to ostentation, he was far from ungenerous.

In the course of the evening he assured Terentia, that the twenty thousand pounds she had already received should continue her own, on condition she disapproved not of the man whom he had selected for her future husband; and Terentia, who began to receive a more favourable opinion of her parent than his behaviour at first had given her reason to suppose he merited, promised to obey his commands.

In

In a week Mr. and Mrs. Mountaign left them, to go to their country seat—Mr. Fairfax having before that period, left his kind benefactor to take possession of his new living, which was not more than thirty miles distance from Hatfield Grove, and which Terentia and her father had promised, in company with the Bryants, to see before the summer expired.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A fresh instance of paternal authority.

MR. Sackville now took possession of the house of his late friend ; and suffered the arrangement made by him to remain unaltered, except by the addition of three black servants, and another of gold lace, and tags instead of worsted to the liveries already bespoke.

An interim of three months had passed without event; during which Terentia often regretted that the splendor with which she was now surrounded, had not been hers at the time Grovesby first honoured her with his notice.—When one day as they were at dinner, she was desired from her father to prepare for the reception of her future husband; who, he expected, would be at the grove within the present week; and who he declared should be his son within three days after his arrival.

A declaration so arbitrary, disordered every faculty of the trembling Terentia, who ventured again to intreat him not to render her wretched by forcing her inclinations; if, on a knowledge of his friend, she found him repugnant to her taste.

“I have set my heart on this union,” he cried, “and whether or no your taste and mine agree, I shall hold myself bound, in honour and gratitude, to perform a promise made to merit so truly deserving.—So

no

no whining, girl, but prepare to be obedient, or you have no longer a father in me."

He said not for an answer, but with majestic stalk left her to think, and to be wretched.

From this unpleasing reverie, she was roused by the entrance of Mrs. Bryant, who came to invite her to walk.—The sight of so dear a friend added fresh softness to her already depressed spirits, and flinging her arms round her neck, she sobbed out, "O dearest madam, what can I do? my father's friend will be here in a few days, and I must either bind myself in a chain of wretchedness, or, as he has just assured me, give up all dependance on his paternal protection.—Advise me, my ever kind monitress, how to act with rectitude—yet keep clear from a bondage which my soul recoils at.

"Be calm, my love," replied Mrs. Bryant, "till you see what reason you have for this terror—*sufficient to the day is the evil thereof*; this much dreaded husband may, for any thing you know, be worthy your regard.—Give not a parent reason to suspect that self-will alone directs you. If when you see him, and he really is destitute of those essentials which are necessary to make you happy, I will, myself undertake to plead for you—till then let not cruel anxiety so mark your countenance.

Sensible of the justness of her reasoning, and calmed by her kind promise, Terentia assured her friend she would endeavour to suspend her grief; and when Mr. Sackville returned, which was soon after, she received him with a tranquil aspect. But he appeared
displeased

displeased—on his brow hung that fallen sternness, which ever distinguishes an arbitrary power when in contest with an inferior object: and during the time he staid in the room, he directed his discourse to Mrs. Bryant, nor once noticed the efforts of Terentia on every little occasion to regain his lost favour; and when entreated to walk into the fields, he only answered with determined energy, “I chuse to be alone.”

It was now the latter end of June, and the field in which they walked yielded a delightful prospect; mountains whose rising eminence caught new beauties from the humble dales, and meadows interspersed with woodlands, far as the expanded sight could reach, attracted the high soaring eye of humanity, nor suffered it here to rest; it turned the soul as it were into a stage of wonder and admiration, and gave a topic for a conversation on the sublimity of its author.

They had rambled near a mile from the house, and had just got in view of the road, when their attention was attracted by a pompous funeral procession; and Mrs. Bryant exclaimed, great God! the arms on the state coach are Sir Paulet Grovesby's! how strange she added, that Mr. Bryant has never been apprised of his illness! but perhaps an apoplectic fit has taken him off.

As this event had happened too late to save Terentia the pangs which attended an ill placed passion—it required little philosophy to observe it without perturbation; and she only felt a momentary regret on the reflection that the Bryants might lose their present dependance;

pendance : that fear was, however, soon obliterated by the rising hope that her father's gratitude and generosity would both be engaged on such an occasion, to support those benevolent worthies who had long since snatched her from the impending horror of poverty.

During their return Mrs. Bryant appeared pensive, and staid no longer at the grove than to take leave of Mr. Sackville ; and Terentia suspecting the cause of her disquiet, promised to call on her the next morning, and took the first opportunity to hint the hopes which sprung from the goodness of her own heart, in order to find out if they were built on a solid foundation. In this, however, she was disappointed, for Mr. Sackville only answered, that unless she would promise to oblige him in the point on which he had set his heart, he should hold her unworthy of any favour in his power to grant.

Alarmed beyond expression at a manner so repulsive, she burst into tears, and retired to her room ; where, during the rest of the evening (for she was not desired to appear) she reflected on the mutability of human felicity, and condemned the tyrannical custom of the Indies, as the cause of that fastidiousness which appeared to be the ruling characteristic of a father whom she wished to honour.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A visit from 'squire Onset—his remarks during his journey to the Continent—with the arrival of a stranger.

THE next morning she sent the maid with her duty, desiring to know if she might be permitted to make her father's breakfast; and received for answer, "that she might attend him."

She accordingly went down, and on enquiring how he had rested a second time, he answered;

"If you regarded my health, Terentia, you would pay implicit obedience to my will; all pretension to affection are insults on the understanding when that is wanting."

She was about to answer, when the servant announced 'squire Onset; who, followed by his two hounds as usual, blundered into the room, and very familiarly shook hands with Terentia, apologizing for his not seeing her sooner, by saying he had for the last four months had a little tour, and in his return home had just touched on the continent.

While Mr. Sackville supposing him an intimate acquaintance of Mr. Hatfield's, endeavoured to shake off his anger by entering into a conversation with him:

"How do you like France, Sir?" was the introducing question.

"Not at all, Sir," answered the 'squire,

"I would

"I would rather cut up my hounds than partake of a Frenchman's table; their dishes are all so oil'd, vinegar'd, and garlicked, that I never enjoyed a good meal from the time I left England, to the time I returned to it again. Aunt Tabitha says I am grown as thin as a hurdle.

"But surely, Sir, if you had required it, you might have had something cooked to your own taste; the French are too polite a people not to wish to accommodate strangers in such trifling particulars."

"Sir, you are much mistaken; a French cook is so tenacious of his knowledge in those matters, that was you to give him ten times the worth of a veal or lamb chop to have it done in the English mode, he would not omit what he calls the delicious flavour of his favourite garlick, and this for the honour of that taste on which they so much pride themselves.

"This is amazing!" answered Mr. Sackville, "I thought ease and freedom, so much the characteristic of that nation, that you had but to signify your desire to be accommodated with whatever you wished to attain."

"Quite the reverse, I assure you," cried the squire; "I desired to have an English knife and fork to eat my dinner with, but was obliged to sit down with a knife only, and that with a point as narrow as the tip end of a tea-spoon.—D—me if I had half satisfied the cravings of an empty stomach, before every thing solid was discharged from the table.

The

The East Indian smiled, and the 'squire proceeded :

“ Your ideas of ease and politeness are quite erroneous—they are—as bigotted to their fashions, as a hound to his scent. Even a hair dresser scorns to disgrace himself by deviating from the taste of his nation—for though I offered him half a crown to let my head remain in the English mode—he turned short on his heel, and with all the grimace of his country, told me, I could not be indulged in so uncouth a request, without his eternal disgrace !”

Mr. Sackville now enquired concerning the city of Paris, and its police ?

But the ideas of the squire, which seldom extended beyond hunting, eating, and drinking, had been so deeply engaged in the disappointments he had that way met with, that the buildings, the police, the government, and, in short every observation requisite to the improvement of knowledge in a traveller, had, by him, passed unnoticed ; and he was now timely relieved from an answer which would have discovered as much, by a post-chaise entering the yard, which caused Mr. Sackville to exclaim, “ Oh ! he is come ! Henry, the preserver of my life is at last arrived !” At which words he hastily left the room, and flew to embrace the stranger.

He soon returned, and with him a very handsome youth, who appeared to be about eighteen—a pleasing sweetness blended with gravity was visible in his countenance, while an air of serenity, intermixed with a diffidence, rendered him a much less alarming

object than the fears of Terentia had suggested him to be—and instilled into her mind the pleasing idea of his being incapable of coinciding with the tyranny of her father, when he found his addresses were repugnant to her wish.

The 'squire soon departed, and Terentia was about to leave the room, in order to give directions for the day, when Mr. Sackville, with his usual sternness forbade her going till she had given him her word to be obedient to his wish in being the wife of his friend.

Her heart recoiled at the idea; and prompted by the dread of future misery, she with more spirit than he thought her possessed of, answered:

“Honour impels me, Sir, to assure your friend, that however deserving he may be—and however I may wish to please the author of my being—my affections are not in my power!—I have no heart to give!—and if, as my mind portends, he is possessed of that true greatness of mind which distinguishes the man of generous principles from the mercenary pretender to affection, he will scorn to accept my hand on terms so destructive to my peace!”

Mr. Sackville, with the looks of a fury, desired Henry to have a good heart—for that he should not be disappointed—and added; “the world is come to a fine pass, indeed, if such a girl as this, is thus openly to defy a father’s command!”

While the stranger, with looks of compassion, made some apologies for the affliction which he had occasioned her, and added: “However I may regret the disappointment, Madam, on which perhaps depended every
future

future good—I have a soul too great to accept the hand of a princess, where freedom of choice is wanting to insure felicity!”

A rising storm had been gathering in the mind of Mr. Sackville, from the moment Terentia had expressed herself so contrary to his inclinations—pride, on an answer at once so galling to the hopes he had built in carrying his point—now augmented to the whirlwind: he stamped, swore and insisted that he would be obeyed—or, that he would for ever renounce a daughter who deserved not his protection!—and, leaving the room, told them he should return again in an hour, and should then expect her final answer.

The stranger now desired Terentia would be calm—assuring her she had nothing to fear on his account; that he would, to prevent her from ill-treatment, instantly leave that part of the world, and endeavour to find out some near and dear friend, who, he hoped, yet existed.

Terentia, who had already conceived a friendship for a person who appeared to be possessed of every good quality which constitutes a worthy character, almost repented she could not regard him with the eye of affection—and signified her desire to learn the particulars of his fortune, during his residence in India; particularly that period in which he had saved her father's life!

Henry answered, that being shipwrecked about five years since, in company with an uncle who had undertaken the care of him, and who had perished in the storm, while the waves had washed him on an island near the residence of Mr. Sackville, he had been dis-

covered by some of that gentleman's servants, who had repaired thither on observing the wreck : that on being presented to him he appeared much pleased with him—that by his assiduity to make himself useful, he had gained the esteem and friendship of his kind benefactor, who had long treated him as his son—that on being out one day on a sailing party, a squall of wind overfet their vessel, and that at the hazard of his own life he had saved that of his friend! that in return, Mr. Sackville had promised to make him all the restitution in his power, by giving him his daughter in marriage, on his return to England—"but," added he, "I should ill deserve the friendship I have experienced from so kind a benefactor, could I *now* be ungrateful enough to render that daughter wretched."

"And I," said Terentia, "should ill requite such disinterested behaviour, if I suffered you, through *me*, to lose that grateful friendship which you have so justly merited.—No! I will on his return appear to acquiesce in his desires—let him suppose I favour your suit—by that means we shall gain time to fall into some measure to soften that rigour which terrifies me more than I can express!—As a brother, how could I value the distinguished friend of my father!"

"And how!" cried the stranger, "could I revere a soul so great!—Why did I not know you sooner—or, why know you at all! But to favour our scheme, I will, to-morrow, set out in search of my friends; I left them in the farthest most part of the west of England—Should I find them living—how will they regret among the many contingencies of my life,

life, a disappointment which has deprived them of such a daughter!—but I have done—you shall find, Madam, that misfortunes have taught me philosophy!”

“ ’Tis a matter of wonder,” said Terentia, wishing to turn the subject of philosophy to something less interesting, “ that during the term of five years, you never have heard any account of your friends!—Yet why do I wonder? it is a long time since I had any news of my father!—indeed we thought him no more!”

“ Mr. Sackville,” said Henry, “ dreading, as he was pleased to say, a separation; would never suffer me to let them know I was still alive! always alledging that as they must long before any letter from me could have arrived, have heard of the loss of our ship, the idea of my still existing, without the means of a support, would only add to their grief: whereas their concluding me no more, though it might be productive of present affliction, yet it would exempt them from future misery!”

“ Terentia now recollecting that his name was yet unknown to her—enquired by what name she should call her brother!

The stranger, with a look which at once indicated pleasure and regret, was about to answer—when the return of Mr. Sackville chained his tongue, by his asking in a voice of tyranny—if he had yet a daughter?

“ You have an angel! Sir,” cried Henry; “ but let me intreat you to lay aside all austeriety to a child who wishes to oblige you—though she thinks a little time necessary to

make observations on a character which you, Sir, are perhaps too partial to."

"If this is the case," answered Mr. Sackville, "I am easy—yet I think it a little extraordinary that my judgment is to be supposed exceptionable. But come, Terentia, holding out his hand—let me know when I am to keep open house, for I am determined to celebrate your nuptials with all the pomp of the East!—not a creature within five miles of the village but shall remember the day that blesses me with the son of my choice!"

Henry bowed, while a blush of duplicity overspread the face of Terentia—and instantly recalling her appointment with Mrs. Bryant, she pleaded that, as an excuse to withdraw—while Mr. Sackville observed,—that the delicacy of the English ladies was equally troublesome as the forwardness of those of other countries—and added, "I suppose she will expect to keep you in suspense for a twelvemonth if I don't interfere, but depend upon it she shall be yours in a month."

Henry thanked him for his well-meant kindness—after which he proposed the next day to set out on his journey to the West.

Mr. Sackville could very well have excused this journey—being so selfish in the love of Henry, as to dread, lest the affection of his parents should lessen the esteem which the youth had always shown for himself; but a meeting could not now be prevented; and he acquiesced in his wish, though not without assuring him he should be extremely jealous

jealous if he staid above a week—besides, he added, I must first introduce you to our neighbours; they will, I am certain, be proud of having the honour of your acquaintance."

He then asked him if he had any objection to a walk, as he wanted to shew him some improvements which we has making on an estate he had just purchased.

Henry agreed: and they sallied forth into the same field where Terentia and Mrs. Bryant had walked the evening before; after which they went to the place appointed; and lastly, Mr. Sackville proposed taking him to Mr. Bryant's, to whom, he said, he had been under great obligations on Terentia's account.

In returning from the building, they crossed the poultry yard, where Terentia's old traveller was busy in feeding his feathered community. Mr. Sackville having acquainted Henry with the manner of their first introduction, and what followed; the youth turned to the old veteran:

"You are, indeed," he said, "happy, to be the care of youth, beauty, and wisdom, at an age so great—I could almost wish to leap through my prime of life to be so noticed!"

"All in good time," answered Mr. Sackville; "I dare say you would be wonderfully sorry to change situations with this good old man a month hence."

Henry sighed! and the old man said:

"Indeed, Gentlemen, I enjoy more happiness than a sovereign prince! as my subjects here," pointing to the poultry, "unlearned

in deceit—will form no plots or stratagems to betray me!—nor will dark-minded faction wound my peace!—No!—Free from the idea of soaring to be my equal—or indulging the ungrateful wish of disputing my will—that gratitude which instinct implants in all—but which deep-rooted error and upstart pride, in too many of the human race, has totally dispelled, now stands confessed in their gestures—as, attentive to my call, they rush in promiscuous crouds to taste my daily bounty.



CHAPTER XXVI.

An agreeable discovery.

TERENTIA found Mrs. Bryant in the parlour; on her entrance, she started—“My dear girl, I am happy to see you,” she said, “though, I own I am a little disappointed, as I thought it was Mr. Bryant, who has been gone since five in the morning, to learn the particulars of Sir Paulet’s death.—How very unfortunate, my dear Terentia, is this event!”

“Let not, dearest Madam, the loss of this friend distress you,” said Terentia, tenderly wiping away the falling tear—which on the dread idea of being again destitute, had started unbidden from her eye—“is not your orphan dependant, now in the possession of affluence? believe me, such is the real affection which I bear you—that to be deprived the power of rendering the eve of your life happy, would exempt me from every real felicity! but come,” she continued, “you must rejoice with your daughter on her deliverance from that chain of dark thoughts which yesterday oppressed her.”—She then acquainted her with the arrival of the stranger, and with his generous acquiescence with her wishes.

Mrs. Bryant smiled through her tears—and told her he had taken the only method to ensure her gratitude—“which,” added she, “to a mind like my Terentia’s, is often productive of a more tender passion.”

"Shall I own," answered Terentia, "there is something in the manner of my father's friend, that I am exceedingly interested in, and which makes me regret I cannot love him. Why did the form of Grovesby banish, as it has done, every hope of future felicity in this unhappy bosom?"

A thundering rap at the door now informed them that some visitors were entering. Mrs. Bryant breathed on her hand in order to dispel the redness from her eyes, and Terentia began to recollect her gloves were rather soiled, when her father and the young stranger entered.

Mrs. Bryant no sooner raised her eyes to bid them welcome, than she screamed aloud, and fell senseless on the floor—while Henry flew to her assistance, and in a transport of fearful joy, cried, "It is—it is my mother!"

A consciousness of my inability to describe it, prompts me to leave to my readers' imagination what passed in the bosom of Mrs. Bryant on her recovery—suffice it to say, it would have been a good subject for the pencil of a Reynolds, to trace with its inimitable colourings, the various emotions of surprise, doubt, and joy, which at once animated her countenance on a discovery so grateful to her fond heart;

While Terentia, less interested, experienced sensations equally pleasing, though unattended with that acuteness of joy which makes even pleasure painful.

In the breast of Mr. Sackville far different emotions arose—he blamed himself for having from selfish views detained a son of such merit, from parents so worthy—and convinced

vinced of the ill-consequences which such a proceeding might have been productive of, he resolved, if possible, to erase it from their memory, by investing them with a large share of his fortune, the whole of which amounted to little less than two hundred thousand pounds.

The only anxiety which remained on the mind of Mrs. Bryant, was, how to inform the worthy partner of her heart of an acquisition which, from the abruptness of the interview, had nearly proved dangerous to her intellectual faculties.

There was, however, no time to consider of a method less alarming, for while they were planning a scheme for that purpose, he entered, and with looks of love, whispered Terentia—that the wheel of Fate seemed turning in her favour.

Terentia, thinking this speech had its origin from the fascinating appearance of the stranger, answered:

“I believe I can return you the pleasing compliment, for I assure you, I have the strangest intelligence to communicate—”

“Oh! oh!” interrupted Mr. Bryant, supposing she had heard of the mistake made by Mrs. Bryant, with regard to the funeral of Sir Paulet (which in fact, was no other than that of lady Belinda, who, having caught cold, by setting too long under the hands of the hair dresser, after a violent fever with which she had been attacked) “you are, I trust then, at no loss to find out my enigma!”

“Really, Sir,” said Terentia, a little surprised, “I am not proficient enough in the

art of divination, to understand your meaning!"

Mr. Bryant had, during Terentia's answer, fixed his eyes on the stranger—and Mr. Sackville, whose heart smote him for the part he had acted, and who anxiously wished to apprise him of the arrival of his son, now said:

"Can you forgive me, my friend! for thus long depriving you of the society of such a child! at a time too, when your generosity supported and protected *mine* from the hand of adversity—the narrowness of my conduct appears, at this moment in such unnatural colours, I shall never again think myself your equal—never rest, till by a conduct less interested—I convince you I am not quite unworthy of your friendship."

Henry now fell on his knees—while Mr. Bryant exclaimed—"Great God! is it possible!—Do I again embrace my child!—By what strange Providence hast thou been preserved, and what strange reverse of fate has thus long withheld thee from my arms?"

An eclaireissement now took place—and Mr. Bryant, reflecting on the fatherly part Mr. Sackville had acted towards his much loved fugitive, and justly esteeming favours which, in the end, had proved so conducive to his happiness—though regretting the intricacy which marked the manner of conferring them, nobly forgave the pangs he had suffered (in supposing him no more!) and embraced in perfect harmony the future friend of his heart;

Who, to the utter confusion of Terentia, now proposed that the next day's sun should witness the nuptials of his children; adding, that

that until that event, which had long been the first wish of his heart was accomplished, his joy would be incomplete.

Mr. Bryant looked on his son with an intent to develope the inmost recesses of his heart; but Henry, too noble to prefer his own happiness to that of Terentia, betrayed not that extreme joy which he had expected to find expressive in his countenance; and to the surprise of the two gentlemen, he answered :

“However gratified my utmost wishes would be by an union so much beyond either my desires or expectations both in point of perfections and intellectual endowments, I must now, and, I hope,” turning to Mr. Sackville, “without increasing the displeasure of my best friend, declare—that I never will accept so desirable a treasure, on terms less essential to felicity, than that of an union of hearts !”

“Noble minded youth !” cried Terentia, “thou art indeed deserving of more felicity than such a bankrupt as myself can bring you—may you be happy, whatever is the fate of Terentia !

A glow of satisfaction overspread the face of Mr. Bryant, from a declaration so agreeable to his wish—while surprise, anger, and contempt, stood boldly descriptive in the countenance of Mr. Sackville.

“What !” cried he, “How !—Did you not tell me, my daughter would be dutiful ? I will have no child who prefers the gratification of self-will, to that of preserving my peace !—I will give every shilling I am worth
to

to charitable uses—if the child of my heart thus turns against her father !”

“ Self-will, my ever honoured Sir,” cried Terentia, “ is not the cause of my disobedience—a more fatal obstacle will not suffer me to render so much worth, as stands confessed in this your friend, miserable !—for unless *the reign of my affections was lent me*, to render the journey through that *road of care* blissful ; of what can I assure him but a certainty of wretchedness !”

Mr. Bryant now took Mr. Sackville by the arm, and begged he would accompany him to his study, having something (as he said) to communicate, in which he was much interested ; and Terentia took that opportunity to return home, but not before she had invited the Bryants to dinner.

The day passed in a reciprocal rehearsal of the incidents of the Bryants, during the long absence of Henry, and the reason of their removal from the West of England.

Mrs. Bryant took the first opportunity, which happened not till late in the evening, to acquaint Terentia with the change in the Grovesby family ; and added that Mr. Bryant had, and she hoped with some success, communicated this intelligence to her father, who, though not fully convinced of the impropriety of her marrying Henry, or satisfied with giving up his favourite scheme, appeared not so very strenuous for an immediate union as he had heretofore been.

When retired for the night, Terentia, freed from the dread of persecution, gave way to sensations of a different kind ; though, perhaps, not less painful—The grateful intercourse

tercourse of mutual affection, at one moment glided through her raised imagination—while the next presented the haughty spirit of her father, clashing with the equally proud though more mercenary one of Sir Paulet. Even Grovesby might ere this have converted his regard into dislike—or the rumour of her marriage with Conyers, might have erased her entirely from his mind.

In this reverie of anxious fear, she was interrupted by her maid, who, on entering her room, exclaimed :

“ Mercy on us, Ma’am, how strangely things are come about—I dare say Mr. and Mrs. Bryant were never so happy in their lives—nay, well they may, for I have never seen so handsome a man—and then ; he is so good-natured, there is not the least fear but he will make a charming husband—Mungo says, that the Indians love him better than they do opium.”

“ The Indians,” answered Terentia, vexed at her intrusion, “ are not more partial to that destructive despoiler of sensibility, than thou to the music of thy own tongue.”

“ Nay, Ma’am, I only repeat his own words ; but for that matter, Mungo has talked of nobody else, since his arrival ; though, to be sure, servants have no right to trouble their betters with the low chit chat of the kitchen, and if you don’t like him, to be sure it signifies nothing Master’s being so *obstrepulous*.”

“ Every body !” reiterated Terentia (impressed with the idea of Grovesby’s being made acquainted with the rumour) “ I charge you on pain of my displeasure, never to mention

tion or suffer any one else to divulge this my father's intention of giving me to Mr. Bryant, for most certainly I shall never be his."

"Oh! Ma'am, as to that," she answered, "you may depend on my being as silent as night; for I am sure if you don't like him, it is cruel in Master to be so urgent—for as to fortune, every body knows Mr. Bryant can't give him nothing; and as to himself, why he had not a second coat to his back when Master found him just dead for want—Indeed, when one comes to think of the matter, and consider all things—I think it is a piece of assurance to aspire to your ladyship at all!—Mongo says, that Master is as rich as a Nabob! and that he has got as many *diamonds* as will buy both houses of parliament! and for that matter—I said as soon as I saw him, that Mr. Conyers was a thousand times handsomer!—I am sure every body was sorry when Master came and parted you."

"Whatever may be my reason for disapproving Mr. Bryant for a husband," said Terentia, "I will not allow any one to reflect on my father's friend—He is the most generous, most amiable, most accomplished of men; and would do honour to a much more exalted station than any in which I could place him!"

The girl having no idea that panegyric, like the foregoing, could be dictated by any thing less than the tender passion, answered:

"Nay, Ma'am, every young lady has a right to have *two opinions*; if I was a gentlewoman myself, and had a mind to be secret in my affairs, I would never let my right hand

hand know what my left did—and certainly, every body may see Mr. Bryant is a gentleman—for as to dignity of manners, (as Thomas says) there is hardly his equal. Mr. Conyers, to be sure is very handsome—but then Mr. Bryant beats him all to nothing, with regard to air and the like—but as to what I hear and see, I would rather die than divulge it.”

“Well,” said Terentia, tired of her jargon, “you may now leave me; I wish to be alone, and will dispense with your further assistance.”

The next morning a new alarm took possession of her spirits by a note from Mr. Bryant, with an account that his beloved wife (to whom the surprise of the preceding day, would, he feared, proved fatal) was dangerously ill, and begged to see her immediately.

She was met at the door by the disconsolate Mr. Bryant—“Alas! my amiable friend, how happy did I yesterday think myself—and how wide is the compass of this day’s misery?”

His terrors were, however, in some measure groundless, for though the delicacy of her constitution suffered much from this unexpected surprise—yet, at the period of three weeks, she was so far recovered as to be thought able to undertake a journey to receive the benefit of a different air, which her physician had ordered, as the only thing now necessary to establish her health.

For this purpose, Mr. Sackville proposed visiting a maiden relation of his—and, in a few days, after giving a strict charge to her servant to convey any message which might
arrive

arrive from Grovesby to the seat of Miss Stapleton, (the lady whom they were going to visit) Terentia, in company with her friends, left Hatfield Grove, for the still more beautiful prospects of South Wales.

CHAPTER XXV.

A rencontre.

DURING this excursion of the Sackville family, Mr. Grovesby was attending his father, who had been ill ; and was now, by order of his physicians, trying the Bristol hot wells.

Miss Musgrove, who was with them at the time of Lady Belinda's death, and who, merely to gratify a desire of captivating our new made widower, had feigned a stomachic complaint, was also of the party.

It has already been observed that Mr. Conyers had communicated his intended marriage to Grovesby ; but as Mrs. Mountaign did not return to London, but went immediately into the furthest parts of H——shire, and as Mr. Conyers had long since left England, too much depressed to give even his dearest friends the reason, he was an entire stranger to her real situation.

Miss Musgrove, anxious to gain the esteem of the object of her adoration, watched every turn in his countenance ; and if at any time a sigh escaped him, she had always some expedient at hand to intercept the gloom of progressive thought. She would persuade him to walk—or propose a ride—or offer to attend him to the rooms : in short, by thus constantly experiencing her desire to give pleasure, his gratitude became engaged ; and though he was cautious in giving her reason
to

to suppose she had any ascendancy over his heart, yet his behaviour at times bordered so much on that of true friendship, that her sanguine hope of succeeding began now to gain ground, and the idea of figuring away in the character of Mrs. Grovelby, was of all others the most predominant.

Ignorant, therefore, of her being at liberty, and encompassed with the intangling snare of another woman, it is not a matter of much surprize that Terentia engaged little of his thoughts. His father's determination to render him wretched, had taught him to struggle with his passion: and the supposition that she was now another's, had fortified him in this resolution.

Far differently were the thoughts of Terentia employed; in anxious expectation and cruel disappointment, she had passed a whole month without once hearing from the object of her constant thought; but then recollecting that Grovelby, ever actuated by the principle of rectitude, from prudential reasons might defer his seeing her, she blushed at the *incongruity* of her expectations, and became, though not less earnest in her hope of being beloved by the only man who could render her happy; yet less sanguine with regard to the assurance that she was so.

Miss Stapleton did not contribute much to the enlivening the party, as that lady prized herself too much on the character of a devotee, to enter into any amusements wherein the mind might relax from care; a constant succession of devout exercises, which on no account whatever could be dispensed with, took up at least half the day; if it

rained,

rained, she flew to her closet to pray for fine weather, that the hay might not be damaged: if a few days sunshine blessed the labour of the husbandman, she instantly dreaded the loss of the afterseed, observing it was turning brown for want of an heavenly shower; nor could she rest till she had asked of Providence what she was convinced was so very necessary to the existence of the tawing herds. On Mr. Bryant's once asking her if she did not think it presumptuous to pray for blessings, *as she might think them?* She answered, with all the consequence of a Pharisaical boaster, that,

"The elected people of God could not but do the thing that was *right!*"

In short, by an ostentation which is by no means consistent with true piety, she rendered herself suspicious to the judicious eye, and the more so, as her charity on many occasions had shewn itself to be very confined.

Mr. Sackville, after satisfying himself with admiring the beautiful declivities of this truly enchanting country, during the space of six weeks, now proposed to spend a few days at Bristol in their return to Hatfield Grove.

Miss Stapleton observed, that during the course of her moral life (which amounted to fifty-eight years) she had never entered that place of iniquity.

"Then," answered Mr. Sackville, "we will take you with us; for truly, coz, thou art so encrusted with methodistical rust, that a little of the Bristolian polish is absolutely necessary to give us an idea of your true colour."

It

It was not without much persuasion that she consented to be of the party; however on condition that she might be suffered to retire whenever her heart pointed out the necessity of prayers, either for herself or friends, (the latter of which she assured Mr. Sackville were never forgot in those breathings of the spirit, fearing she had many incapable of that sacred office, being in a state of reprobation, and uncalled to the seat of mercy) she condescended to prepare for the journey.

Mr. Sackville assured her she should be under no restraint; and a week from this period, to the no small joy of Terentia, who was by no means gratified by this visit, they left the sacred mansion of Miss Stapleton, and set forward to the more enlivening scenes of Bristol.

The second day after their arrival, as they were taking an airing in order to reconnoitre the town and its environs, Grovelby, in a very elegant chariot, accompanied by Miss Musgrove, passed their carriage.

Mr. Bryant looked wishfully out of the window, and the countenance of Terentia underwent such a variety of changes, that Henry with great earnestness enquired the cause of her disorder.

Terentia replied she was not very well; while Miss Stapleton, who held the power of love in the utmost detestation, (the celestial and platonic excepted) and who, from seeing a handsome young gentleman in the carriage, and observing the emotion of our heroine, supposed herself to be in possession of the cause of her disorder, with uplifted hands and eyes, exclaimed,

“ O generation

"O generation of sensualists! how does carnal inclination overpower the spiritual! why, cousin Terentia, would you cast an eye on such a dangerous piece of temptation?"

"Do you speak experimentally, madam?" said Mr. Sackville, piqued at the grossness of her insinuations, "if so, you have given us an excellent reason for your perpetual excursions to devotion; as it is certainly the duty of every Christian to pray against those sins *which most easily beset them*."

"No, Sir," she answered, "I have, thank heaven been preserved from all follies of that kind; my motive for speaking was merely to hint my dislike to the fashionable method of our modern fine ladies; who, I am extremely sorry to say, make such indecent use of their eyes, that I have more than once been obliged to hold my fan before *mine*, to hide the blushes such ill-judged wantonness had occasioned."

Terentia was too much engaged by the rencontre, to notice this specimen of a quality, which she had from her first knowledge of her cousin, found on many occasions that she possessed in an eminent degree.

In their return home, a large concourse of people had gathered together, within a few doors of their lodgings, so that the carriage could not conveniently pass; and on asking a countryman the reason, he answered,

"Why, an it please your honours, there be two great lords, who because they have nothing else to do with their money, have taken it into their heads to lay a vast huge wager about nothing in the world but a lady's bonnet; and because as how she is rather
shy,

shy, and don't like to be stared at, she run into that there house; and so an it please your honours, they stand there to dog her as it were to decide the wager: if it is a *traten*, why the lord on the right hand will win five hundred pounds; and if it is not why, an it please your worships, he must sit down with the loss on't."

Miss Stapleton now began to pray with an audible voice, that the poor lady might get out of the clutches of such extravagant spend-thrifts.

Her voice arrested the attention of the gentleman on the right hand, whom Terentia, immediately knew to be lord Ashton, and a few minutes after came out the lady, who had so muffled up her face, that not the least traces of it were visible, yet the air and walk struck our heroine as something very similar to that of his lady's.

The wager being decided in favour of his lordship, the croud dispersed; they reached their lodging without further incident, and in the evening, Henry persuaded Terentia to accompany him to the ball room.

Miss Stapleton urged by affection (as she said) to watch and protect her cousin Terentia, offered to accompany them to this insipid amusement; not that she would dance; for she would take Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart, by way of passing the tedious hours away with some degree of rectitude, it being utterly impossible for her to enjoy the continual shuffling of the dancers, or the still more vibrating disturbance of the music.

The

The gentlemen smiled, and Mr. Sackville, in order to try the sincerity of her ridiculous prudery, offered, on condition that Mr. Bryant would accompany him, to put on his dancing pumps, and walk a minuet with her.

"La, Sir!" with a simper was the answer.

On retiring to dress, Miss Stapleton asked Terentia if she really thought her father in earnest?

"Doubtless," she answered, "and I really think you will make a very graceful pair, and do honour to the times in which you were initiated in that polite accomplishment."

"Why indeed, my dear," she answered, "I have been counted a great proficient in that science, that is, in my younger days—and I believe I can *now* do pretty well, if Mr. Sackville has but as good a notion as myself—but, my dear, what dress shall I wear, my pink or my yellow—which do you think will be the most becoming? One would wish to appear like other people, you know, in such a large assembly."

Terentia, diverted at the turn in the old maid, had just advised her to figure away in her pink, when the maid entered (sent by Mr. Sackville) with the before mentioned book.

"Pshaw!" cried her lady, "you are in a violent hurry—I did not want it immediately—go fetch my pink dress and gauze lining, and be sure you find that phial which contains the *specific drops for the stomach*." This last order was given with a look of significance which, perhaps, the maid did not chuse to understand; for she soon returned with the dress, linen, and phial! but to the no small astonishment of Terentia, the

words

words specific drops—were changed into the more valuable expletive of that all powerful, and most assured creator of love and beauty, called the Venetian bloom.

Terentia was too well-bred to sport with the feelings of her fellow-creatures; being sensible that perfection was no where to be found—she therefore, without letting Miss Stapleton know she observed the cosmetic, left her to her toilet, and returned to her own.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A Ball—with a plan for revenge

HENRY and Terentia had just begun the first minuet, when Mr. Grovesby and Miss Musgrove entered—on the sight of an object which had ever occupied the first place in his heart, he turned pale—while the eyes of Miss Musgrove darted disdainfully on the superior beauties of our heroine, whose elegant stile of dress gave new lustre to her all-fascinating charms—She endeavoured, however, to compose her ruffled spirits; and approaching Mr. Bryant, enquired if Mr. Conyers was always so very obliging and polite as to allow his lady a cicisbeo.

“Mr. Conyers,” answered Mr. Bryant, “has not yet the honour of being a husband.”

Mr. Grovesby, who, during this speech being too deep in thought to address his friend—now roused by this all-cheering intelligence—rushed forward, saying:

“Is Miss Sackville free then?”

Mr. Bryant smiled, and bowed.

On the wings of soft affection Grovesby hastened to the chair of Terentia, who had set down on his entrance, being totally unable to go through her part of the dance.

Henry arose, and offered him his seat—looks of thanks spoke the language of Grovesby's heart—while he begged Terentia

to confirm the blessed tidings which still, as he said, vibrated through his soul.

She confirmed it, and listened to the professions of affection which she could not doubt, with a degree of satisfaction she had never before experienced.

He staid not longer than to express his joy on a discovery so grateful to his wishes, and to promise he would see her the next morning—for dreading lest the ungovernable passion of Miss Musgrove should by some means impede the happiness which now seemed within his grasp, he pretended a slight indisposition, and returned home, much to the dissatisfaction of his companion.

There was something in the sudden departure of Grovelby, that amazed Terentia—yet the joy he expressed on finding her free, banished every other doubt of her future felicity.

Little gratification fell to the share of Miss Musgrove; every reasonable faculty being obscured in the baleful passions of jealousy and wounded pride, the rancour of which so poisoned every propensity to that softness which for some time had marked her behaviour to Grovelby, that the bitterest reproaches fell from her lips.

While Grovelby, unconscious of deceiving her, begged her to call to her aid that greatness of soul and necessary dignity which could alone render the most beautiful of her sex objects of regard to the worthy of his.

Finding her ill-judged passion would avail her nothing, she changed her behaviour to that of a more endearing kind—said, her affection for him was unconquerable; that she

she could not exist without him ; and finally, that such was his power over her, she would rather trust to his *honour*, than be the wife of the first monarch on earth !

He again besought her to be composed, and to support herself with propriety ; and promised on no other condition to regard her as a friend.

Tears of despair now rushed in torrents down her face, as she vowed never to survive his marriage with another.

The heart of Grovelby was replete with sensibility. He was truly sorry that a woman, who had received a virtuous education, should thus disgrace it by professions which only became the mouth of a courtesan—yet her conduct had, in every other instance, appeared irreproachable—his situation too, and that in which she had thought Miss Sackville to be placed—were in his candid opinion circumstances in her favour—He regretted with the highest concern that she ever became a favourite with lady Belinda, and reflected on himself for suffering her to be of their party to Bristol.

When they returned home they found Sir Paulet at supper.—The baronet had, for some time, from the behaviour of Miss Mufgrove, expected she would wheedle Grovelby to marry her, and as he from obstinacy once made him wretched, he had determined in future not to oppose his designs. He was therefore surprised to find the former the picture of silent grief, and the latter thoughtful and reserved.

During the rest of the evening Mr. Grovelby, thinking on his future prospects, became

more happy and less interested in the indiscretions of his cousin—and Miss Musgrove *who had now* something in view to gratify her reigning passion, affected a serenity of thought, to which she was a stranger—but as it was not consistent with her plot, that Grovesby should relate to his father what, according to her ideas, would come much better from her own mouth, she stirred not till the servant of Sir Paulet entered with lights to conduct him to bed, and then, to the astonishment of Grovesby, begged a few minutes conversation with the baronet in private.

My readers will doubtless be anxious to learn the purport of this desired audience; having no idea that a handsome girl of twenty four, should condescend to make an offer of her hand to Sir Paulet Grovesby!—Yet, certain it is, this was really the case.

Though past his grand climacteric, Sir Paulet was still a fine figure of a man—and, in his youth, had been much noted for intrigue, on this foundation Miss Musgrove had built her hopes of success, the gratification of which appeared to her of much more importance than all the disagreeable occurrences which would doubtless interrupt the little felicity which such an union could be productive of—by this means she could take precedence of her hated rival: and, perhaps, be enabled to disinherit the insulting tyrant, who had so mortified and scorned her love.

A flood of tears preceded the tale she had to unfold; Sir Paulet, moved by her seeming distress, besought her to be calm.—

She

She was miserable, she said, for the ingratitude of Mr. Grovelby, to so tender a father.

The Baronet, surprised at an opening so wholly unintelligible, with much earnestness, begged her to proceed.—

She then related the interview between Terentia and his son, adding:—"were I his father, I would let him see that such premeditated defiance to my will, should not go unpunished!"

Sir Paulet, who still supposed Terentia to be the wife of Conyers, was so far from being offended at this intelligence, that he answered:

"Well, well—he cannot marry her you know—and all young fellows have their frolics; I have had mine, *my girl*, in my time! though now, God help me, I am obliged to relinquish all those comforts for a warm room, and a bandage of flannels!"

This was the critical moment—a bold stroke was necessary—or her scheme might prove abortive;—she therefore, with all the softness in her power, answered:

"You are not so old, Sir Paulet, but you might indulge yourself if your inclinations so led you, with the comfortable solace which arises from being blessed with a companion, who, in my humble opinion, might smoothe the thorny road of your declining life!—there are many women, and young ones too, who would have no objection to such a partner." This was accompanied with a look so languishing!—that the baronet was instantly inspired with a new train of ideas.

"Do you think so! my dear girl;" he answered—bridling with self-consequence; "if I could suppose myself so happy—but it cannot be—I am mistaken—you only meant to joke me."

"Indeed!!" replied Miss Musgrove, highly gratified with the Baronet's manner, "I was never more serious in my life!—I do assure you"—A blush and a pause ensued.—

"What!—What!"—cried the Baronet, eagerly, "Say!—What—my sweet girl!—Why do you pause?—Tell me what you was going to say—A new creation of thought has sprung up in my soul!—Do, my dearest life, tell me of what you was going to assure me of!"

"Excuse me, Sir Paulet—you will think I act not with propriety—I cannot, indeed tell you."

"By heavens!" cried the Baronet, setting by his crutch, and advancing towards her, "I must hear it—I would not part with you for the world!—you know not how happy you have made me!—Keep me not in suspense, and assure yourself of my eternal affection."

"Why then, if I must obey you—I was going to assure you—that—that—la! Sir Paulet, why will you press me to say it—that I would rather be the wife of Sir Paulet Grovesby, than that of a much younger gentleman."

Joy animated the countenance of the Baronet, as he graciously thanked her for this kind condescension—and when, added he, shall the ceremony be performed—I shall never rest till our nuptials are solemnized.

Miss

Miss Musgrove then begged he would be secret with regard to her folly ; for such, she doubted not, in the eye of the world it would appear !”

“ Not for the universe, my angel, would I divulge it ; not even my son shall be made acquainted with this happy turn in my fate, till it is out of his power to give me that advice which I know he will think incumbent on him to give. Suppose, to prevent any disagreeable impertinences which may naturally attend this affair, we send Orland immediately for a special licence. He can keep a secret ; and I am determined, that is, with your leave, my dear girl, to be made happy without delay.”

“ To this Miss Musgrove made no objection, and having gained her point, she returned to her room ; in her way thither she met Grovesby, who, equally anxious as herself to relate his evening adventure, had waited the opening of his father’s door, to attend him for that purpose.

Sir Paulet, as soon as his intended was gone, began to turn his thoughts on his future establishment—and likewise to try, for the first time since his arrival at the Wells, to walk across the room without his crutches—well knowing that an appendage of that kind was very improper for a bridegroom to figure away with.

Whether all sense of pain lies in the mind, I am not going to aver—but certain it is, that from the new ideas that had taken possession of the Baronet, he not only got across the room, but with such alacrity, that when Mr. Grovesby entered, he started to behold him

nimbly tripping towards the bell, in order to send Orland for a license.

This interruption was rather disagreeable—the Baronet with some confusion retired slowly to his chair.

Mr. Grovesby related the incident of the evening, and besought him, with all the filial reverence which he never lost sight of, to give him his consent to marry this first and only object of his love.

Struck with this dutiful behaviour of the child of his affection—a something not the most agreeable, came across his mind on his own intended duplicity—yet to confess an act so derogatory to that solid understanding for which he had been famed, was a task he could by no means think of—and to give up a scheme from which he had promised himself such perfect happiness, was quite foreign to his intention. He therefore contented himself with assuring his son, that he was at liberty to act agreeable to his wishes, which he doubted not would be justified by prudence—and that he expected, if any change with regard to himself should take place, he would, with equal candour, acquit him of an impropriety of conduct.

Gratified at the grant of his request—yet perplexed at the ambiguity of the latter part of his speech—Grovesby was about to beg an explanation, when Orland entered the room; and supposing he had particular business with his master, he left it, and returned to his own.

Orland, who was a particular favourite with his master, and who adored young
Grovesby

Grovesby, on hearing the business he had to transact, ventured to expostulate on the infirmities of old age; and hinted, that with a middle-aged woman of character, prudence, and good-nature, he would stand a much greater chance of happiness, than with one, who he must be free to say, did not appear in his opinion, to be in the possession of any one virtue essential to the rendering him happy.

"'Tis false, villain!" cried Sir Paulet, stamping with passion, *she adores me!* and if that is not the most essential thing towards happiness, I don't know what is—Infirmities, indeed! what, because the last two or three easterly winds brought on a little touch of the gout—I am to be denied all the blessings of life!—I never felt myself more free from infirmity than at this instant—and as to those crutches—I desire I may see them no more! it was all a trick of your's and your young master's, to make me appear more ancient, that they were ever in use at all."

Orland finding the Baronet determined, knew it would be in vain to argue farther on the matter, and the Baronet continued:

"Mark me, Orland; I enjoin you to get a special license, as early as you can to-morrow morning; and on pain of my eternal displeasure, hint not, even in the most distant manner, this affair to my son."

The heart of Orland recoiled at a business so repugnant to his ideas of rectitude; but his whole dependence was on his master, and he was obliged to obey; he therefore set off
on

on an excellent courser, and rode post to London to purchase a chain for Sir Paulet, which he doubted not, would render him unhappy during the remainder of his existence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

An adventure—and a tale of woe.

AS the Sackville party were returning home, their attention was arrested by the voice of a female, who sat on the steps of a door—her appearance was that of an unhappy midnight wanderer, and her voice was the voice of distress.

Henry alighted from the carriage, and offered her his assistance—In the language of poignant grief she thanked him, but said, she wished not to be relieved—she wished but to die in peace!

The voice struck Terentia as one familiar to her ear—she begged her father would permit her to speak a word of comfort to the unhappy person; being convinced, as she said, she had a right to her protection.

Mr. Sackville consented, and at the well-known voice of Terentia, lady Ashton, for it was no other, gave a sudden shriek, and fainted away!

With the assistance of hartshorn she soon recovered, and by order of Mr. Sackville, (who took great pleasure in repaying the obligations which his daughter had received) she supplied the place of Henry; who, during the rest of their way home accompanied Miss Stapleton in her own vis-a-vis.

That lady, for Mr. Sackville (the joke once passed) had never so much as thought of performing his promise—was on the entrance

trance of Henry, in the middle of an ejaculation for the protection of Providence to preserve her in future from becoming a dupe to the artifice of such brutes—

The last mentioned word being spoke in the full resentment of her heart, it vibrated through the ears of Henry; who, ignorant of the real cause of her resentment, concluded it arose from the incident before mentioned; he therefore replied:

“ Indeed, Madam, I am entirely of your opinion; it is evident the poor creature has met with ill-treatment—perhaps from the very wretch that has thus lowered her in the eye of virtue!”

The thoughts of Miss Stapleton were too intent on what she supposed her own disgrace, to attend to the misfortunes of another. The coach had stopped, it is true, but she was too deeply engaged to listen to the cause; nor did she notice the foregoing part of Henry's observation; and concluding from the latter, that he thought her lowered, by this failure of the above promise; she with a look of importance which the flambeau rendered visible, answered:

“ Truly, Sir, I think I should have sunk much lower, in my own opinion, by condescending to dance at all.—I promise you, I should, on reflection, never have forgiven myself for such a piece of indecorum.”

Henry, now perfectly sensible of her mistake, and willing to reconcile her to the terrible disappointment, answered;

“ Mr. Sackville, I will venture to say, has too high an opinion of your good sense, and steadiness of principle, Madam, to suppose
you

you would condescend to oblige him, or otherwise he most certainly would have availed himself of the honour of your hand."

This compliment gratified her vanity—she was pleased, and chatted away with easy familiarity, till the carriage stopped at their lodgings.

A room was instantly ordered to be got ready for the reception of lady Ashton; and Terentia, eager to know how she could serve her, desired a small repast in her own room, that she might, by the efforts of friendship, in some measure relieve her from that anguish which it was evident had long preyed on her mind. As soon as they were alone, her ladyship flung her arms round the neck of Terentia, and bathing it with tears of contrition, gave her the following account of her life, since the unfortunate period which caused Terentia to fly from her protection:

"What can I," said that unhappy woman, "plead in excuse for that folly which has cost me so dear!—'tis true, my pride had received a mortal stab, by the neglect of him, who at the time I gave him my hand, was in the possession of my most tender regards—But was that a reason that I should desert myself? Ah, no! Had the rein of rectitude guided me in that fatal exigency, what a world of misery had I escaped!—but it did not—and against conviction—I plunged into that abyss of infamy from whence no virtue returns unfulfilled.

"Gratified by the notice of a man, who was in every thing equal, in many accomplishments superior to him who ought to have been my best friend—I passed some months comparatively happy—but a short
time

time convinced me, that the duration of illicit pleasure is transient as the morning dews; reflection embittered my days, and my nights, uncheered by the balm of sleep, were spent in unavailing woe.

“Behaviour so ill-calculated to retain the affection of a libertine, first robbed me of his company, and then of his protection—I saw him but seldom—his behaviour but plunged the already pointed dagger still deeper in my overcharged heart.

“With a person too much above the common for a menial employment—and a mind too much weakened to bear its own reflections in confinement—disappointed too of that resource which my lord had promised me—and too conscious of my own ill conduct to trouble him for it—I condescended to hint the terrors of my mind—the idea of being abandoned to an unpitying world; but judge of my feelings, for they are utterly undefinable, when the following answer convinced me humanity had not a place in his heart:

‘While your ladyship has a *husband*, I see no occasion for those needless fears. I have business that requires my immediate attention; and therefore must take my leave.’

“Determined, however, to starve, rather than again solicit favour from a wretch so void of principle, I left the next day in company with my maid the Continent, and set sail for England, where I determined, by some means, to procure by industry that support which could alone bring real pleasure to the indigent.

“But the hand of power had not here set a limit to my sufferings. We hired a lodging

in Windmill-street, on the evening of our arrival; here we had not been many days, when my maid fell sick of a putrid fever, which in less than a week deprived me of her assistance for ever.

“ I also caught the infection; and on my recovery, whether by defraud or necessity I know not, but I found myself dispossessed of all my cash, which was fifteen guineas and some silver, and in the possession of a few changes of raiment only: all which the woman assured me had been expended in my three weeks illness; during which time I had by the violence of my disorder, been rendered insensible to every thing that passed.

“ The ill state of my mind did not forward my recovery; a week more had elapsed, yet I found myself too weak to apply to any kind of business. I began a letter to Mr. Burdet, but conscious shame deterred me from complaining to one who had so justly predicted the fatal consequences of my rash folly, and with tears of anguish I committed the affecting scroll to the flames.

“ In a situation too miserable for description, I was sitting one evening, when a very handsome carriage passed the door: on the woman's speaking with wonder of its superbiety, I arose to look at it—the well-known arms of Ashton, like the blasting lightning, darted before my eyes, and created that poignant reflection, which is the constant concomitant of that mind whose distress is heightened by the stings of remorse. I regretted that ill-judged passion which had caused me to think of retaliating my wrongs, and would have given the whole world to have been possessed
of

of that virtue which is so very essential to support a life of misery, and which alone can render the female character respectable.

"Dreading lest I again should be alarmed with a sight so destructive to my peace, I determined to leave that part of the town; and after parting with a dress to pay for my lodging, I flung myself into a hackney coach, and ordered it into the city.

"In one of the streets that leads to the 'Change, I observed a lodging to let; it was at a ready made linen warehouse. I stopped, inspired with the hope of getting some employment, being, as you know, a tolerable needle-woman for a person of rank.

"I asked the price of the room, and hinted my desire with regard to the work. The mistress of the house looked on me with scrutinizing eyes, and after whispering something to one of the girls, which by her looks I was certain boded me no good, she turned to me, and said,

"Why look you, young woman, I have no mind to be robbed; and it is very unlikely such fine linen as you dress in, should be earned by those delicate white hands, that is, in an honest way. I have neither lodgings to let, or work to put out.

"Deterred by this specimen of rude incivility, from attempting to supplicate any more of the arrogant upstarts of the large metropolis, I ordered the man to drive me to the inn where the Bristol stage puts up—and had the good fortune (as I then thought it) to find it just setting off, with two places vacant.

"Here

“ Here I fortunately got employ at a milliner’s shop; but this morning going to a lady with a box of linen, near the pump-room, lord Afhton, with a gentleman unknown, passed by me, and by laying a simple wager about my bonnet, detained me so long, that my employer sent the servnat in search of me, who unkindly misrepresented the affair; and I, in the utmost disgrace, was instantly discharged; and told I might get my clothes how I could.

“ Without a character; without a friend! and without what is still more necessary, the means to pay for a lodging, I traversed the streets in vain; till weary with fatigue I sunk down, begging of heaven to forgive my offences, and take me to his mercy.

“ In this situation I was accosted by my own footman, with the rude language of the midnight reveller; and on shrinking from his unhallowed touch in silent contempt, he had the barbarity to strike me. My voice would have exposed me to pain more poignant than that which I now experienced; while the wretch fearing, from my staggering, he had given me a mortal blow, left me in an agony of mind almost insupportable.

“ You soon reached the spot—need I say more, but that your humanity has rescued me from a crime still blacker than I have yet committed—yes, my ever-valued friend, you have saved me from self-murder! can you, after what you have heard, pity and forgive the wretch who has through her own misconduct rendered herself offensive to virtue?”

“ Can

"Can I," cried Terentia, whose eyes glistered with inward joy at the idea of having saved this unhappy woman from the dreadful crime of suicide—yes, my once kind benefactress, if a sympathizing friend can banish misfortune from your mind—you have yet a chance for happiness."

"How!" cried lady Ashton, "have I deserved this good-nature? I that have (to set a gloss on my own infamy) condescended to darken in the world's eye, a character altogether spotless.—Oh, Miss Sackville, your lenity has planted a dagger in my heart! How can I ever look up to purity so void of that rigour which too often characterizes a woman of virtue!"

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During this interval, Mr. Bryant had so well pleaded the cause of Grovesby, that Mr. Sackville had given his word to receive him for his son-in-law, on condition that Sir Paulet was likewise agreeable to the union: and on Terentia's returning to the parlour to relate to her friends lady Ashton's tale, and plead for that unhappy wanderer, Mr. Sackville signified his intention to make her happy in the husband of her choice; and promised to settle her ladyship in a little box, not far distant from Hatfield Grove, where she might (as he said) give the world a specimen of her sincerity, by leading a life of penitence.

Miss Stapleton observed, that her cousin Terentia was carrying her idea of charity by
 much

much too far—"I have no notion," she added, "of providing for such loose wantons.—If, indeed, she had justified this piece of charity by living a life of virtue, much might have been said on the subject; but the object considered with that proper detestation of her crimes which must naturally arise from the breast of piety, the merit of the act is entirely lost, at least in my opinion."

"Hey day, Miss Stapleton!" cried Mr. Sackville, "with submission to your pious propensities, I must beg leave to remind you of a part of the Scriptures, which I fear you have overlooked. Are we not told there is more rejoicing over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance?"

"A most pernicious doctrine," answered Miss Stapleton, "and as inconsistent to common sense"—

"As the portrait of piety without the traces of humanity," interrupted Mr. Sackville, as he arose to withdraw for the evening.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

In which the History draws near the conclusion.

THE spirits of Grovesby were too much exhilarated to give way to the soft lures of Morpheus. He told the tedious arrival of each tardy hour—ruminated on the reception he should meet with—and revolved in his mind all those scenes of felicity which, in prospective, danced before his delighted imagination.

With this disposition of mind, my readers will not be surpris'd to find, that long before the usual hour of breakfast, he had taken his seat in the parlour of Mr. Sackville. But as politeness would not suffer him to have his arrival announced at so unseasonable an hour, he amus'd himself with a book till the entrance of Mr. Sackville gave him an opportunity of soliciting his consent to make happy the object of his tenderest regards.

That gentleman being entirely satisfied with the merits of our lover had, as it has been before said, but one objection, viz. the free consent of Sir Paulet; and as Mr. Grovesby had it in his power to satisfy him in that point, the old gentleman shook him by the hand with the kind cordiality of a friend, and rung for the servant to announce him to her lady.

Terentia, who perhaps was as little inclined to befriend the drowsy god as himself, was sitting ready dress'd at her toilet when
the

the maid entered; and on her saying Mr. Grovelby, ma'am,—I know, I know, she answered; and instantly springing from the chair, was at the bottom of the stair-case before the maid had recovered from the amazement into which her lady's precipitation had thrown her.

Mr. Sackville met her at the door, and with a look of paternal affection took her hand;—"Receive, Sir, (presenting her to the enraptured Grovelby) with my blessing, the future partner of your life; and permit me to say, that if goodness of heart, true affection, and a mind untainted with the follies of the age can insure you true felicity, you have more than a chance to attain it."

Scarcely had they time to express their gratitude for his so kindly giving into their wishes, when Henry, who had been employed in giving some directions for fitting up the house appropriated for the residence of lady Ashton, entered; and being presented by his father to Mr Grovelby, as that son whom he had long mourned, a friendship took place; and from those congenial propensities of the human mind, which are so essential to the continuance of that balm to the human heart, it promised to be lasting as the springs of life.

After an agreeable day, in which the *feast of reason*, and the *flow of souls*, had conspired to render it pleasing beyond the conception of those unequal to the joy which such a select party inspires, they were sitting down to supper, when a post coach entered the yard. It was Mr. Mountaign, and in it himself, his lady, and daughter.

Terentia

Terentia flew to receive them, and was expressing herself in terms of pleasure on the friendship of the visit, when Mrs. Mountaign interrupted her, by saying,

“My dear girl, I know not if I *now* merit this grateful welcome, as I assure you this visit was merely accidental—to say truth, it was dictated by curiosity.

By this time they had reached the parlour. On seeing Mr. Grovesby, Mrs. Mountaign started, and exclaimed,

“Good Heavens! Sir, what is the meaning of all this?—can it be possible—how came you here?”

Mr. Grovesby concluding that Mrs. Mountaign was still ignorant with regard to the death of lady Belinda;—after casting an eye on his sable dress, took the hand of Terentia, and answered,

“This, madam, is the talisman that has long enchanted me—and this again, turning his eyes on his dress—the emblem of that freedom which alone could have justified me in paying this visit.”

“Well,” said Mr. Mountaign, “this is the most enigmatical business I ever saw; half an hour ago we met your carriage, your servants out of mourning—their hats decorated with white ribbons; and yourself, as your servant informed mine, in company with your new made bride, hurrying down to your country seat.—And now, by the help of your good angel (for so I must think it) we behold you loosed from the chains of Hymen, and in company with the only woman that can render you happy, as the whole tenor of your conduct deserves.”

Grovesby

Grovesby smiled, and jocosely enquired to whom his imagination, or rather the unaccountable mistake of the servants, had fettered him?

"Nay," said Mrs. Mountaign, "I declare I saw Miss Musgrove and a gentleman; and though the velocity of the carriage, together with the duskiness of the evening, prevented me from taking notice of his person, I have not the least doubt, by the appearance of festivity which marked the retinue, but she is actually married."

"Miss Musgrove!" cried Grovesby, with looks of astonishment, "nay, then I have too much reason to fear there is some truth in this matter—yet surely she could not.—But after what I have witnessed of her conduct, why should I doubt it?—yes, her diabolical propensity to revenge, has certainly stimulated her to this act. She has most assuredly found out the weak side of my father, to hurl perdition (as she supposes) on my head. Cruel unprincipled girl; what an abyss of misery may not this imprudent scheme be productive of to both, nay, to myself!"

Mr. Bryant instantly set out to the lodgings of Sir Paulet.

He soon returned with the confirmation of the news; and the following letter, which had been left for Mr. Grovesby's inspection on his dressing table.

M

Dear

Dear P.

"Before this reaches you, I shall have taken a step which may, perhaps, in your eyes appear unaccountable—nay imprudent.—Be that as it may, I have followed the dictates of my own inclination; example which you are *now* at liberty to enjoy—and for which I do not hold myself accountable to any one.

"I am too much agitated by the felicity which seems *now* within my reach, to say more than, that if you can, with that respect which is due to the wife of my choice, wish me joy on this happy occasion, lady Grovesby and myself would be glad to see you at Grovesby-place."

"N. B. To prevent any disagreement, I now inform you, that you must not expect and addition to that fortune you have already received, as the residue of mine may, perhaps, be rendered necessary to the provision of an increasing family."

P. G.

This letter, the postscript of which had too little of the father in it to leave a doubt of its dictator, was a severe trial to the fortitude of Grovesby—as the fortune of lady Belinda, by her dying without issue, descended to another branch of the family—and, as the idea of a father's marriage had never struck him—much of what he expected was still in the hands of Sir Paulet—so that the whole of his income did not amount to more than eight hundred a year.

This unaccountable turn in his affairs had therefore rendered him very unequal, in point of fortune, to Terentia.—His sensibility, in which

which was blended true generosity of spirit, could not but render him unhappy, at a misfortune which seemed to strike at the very root of all his promised felicity !

“ Let not this news affect you, Sir,” said Mr. Sackville, who saw and pitied his emotion, “ I have more than enough to ensure your felicity. Believe me, such is the high opinion which I have of your merits, and such my ardent desire to confer happiness on my child, that had Sir Paulet cut you off with a shilling, it would not have lessened my desire of calling you my son ! and Terentia cannot oblige me more than by fixing on an early day. I long to let the Baronet know, that without lessening his absurd provision for an increasing family—the husband of Terentia Sackville will be enabled, not only to live in affluence, but in splendour and magnificence !”

After treating this generous advance with that grateful return it deserved, Mr. Grovesby addressing Terentia, said :

“ Can you, Miss Sackville, condescend to take to your arms a bankrupt, who has little more than the purest affection to offer you ?”

“ Be assured, Sir,” she answered, “ my highest ambition will be gratified by having it in my power to set you above the revenge of that ill-principled woman ; and that to render your future life happy, will ever be the first wish of my heart.”

The tear of affectionate sensibility glistened in the eyes of Grovesby as he thanked her for a promise so grateful to his wishes.

The following week, Grovelby, to the entire satisfaction of his friends, and the inexpressible joy of himself, received the hand of Terentia ; and next day, having parted with their town friends, they set out on their journey to Grovelby-place, where they arrived just as the first course of a sumptuous dinner was served in.

CHAPTER XXIX.

In which are displayed the fatal effects of ungovernable passion—and in which the history is concluded.

GROVESBY, happy beyond his utmost wish, forgot the little resentment which had taken place in his breast on his father's strange conduct. He experienced a pang, indeed, on entering the house, but it was occasioned by no self-interested motive. The idea of a father's happiness, or rather misery, engrossed his attention, since with a partner so ill-calculated to produce the former; the latter, he feared, could hardly be avoided.

The Baronet, who *now* found it necessary to cause hostilities to cease, with his crutch-stick, had just seated himself at table; while his lady, (unheeding of the continual murmurs—oaths—and other expletives of that torture which conquers reason even in the most patient dispositions, when torn by the excruciating pangs of that cruel disorder) was helping him very plentifully to some thin soup, strenuously recommending it as a much better antidote to the gout, than any of those delicious viands with which the table abounded.

To this sage advice, Sir Paulet, who had an utter aversion to soup meagre, gave not his assent; and was beginning in a voice not unlike the awful thundering of the heavens on the approach of a storm, to hint her
desire

desire of flinging him into a dropſy, when the unexpected arrival of his ſon and friends diverted his ideas into another channel ; and the conſciouſneſs of his folly flood ſo plainly confeſſed in every turn of his countenance, that Grovesby repented he had not made this viſit alone, when he could have ſoftened an embarraſſment little leſs diſtreſſing to the Baronet, than to his own filial heart ; and in order to erawe it, he began with his bride the uſual ceremony of introduction.

From the Baronet, ſhe met with a very gracious reception—a pang of keen reflection took poſſeſſion of his mind on the recollection of a letter, which muſt have wounded the ſenſibility of a ſon, whole filial piety had ever ſhone conſpicuous in all his actions.

To his lady he now advanced ; and Grovesby, with a countenance expreſſive of that felicity he enjoyed, took the hand of lady Grovesby, and ſaid :

“ Will you not, Madam, wiſh me joy ?—be aſſured your *children* are diſpoſed to do nothing unworthy your maternal protection. Make but my father happy, and reſt ſatiſfied, that however I may have been ſurpriſed at a conduct ſo intricate, and at an event ſo unexpected, regret for it will no longer find a place in my heart.

A bow of cold civility was the only return for a conduct ſo diſintereſted ; and during the dinner, her ladyſhip appeared agitated with the whirlwind of paſſion—diſdainful reproach now lowered on her gloomy countenance as ſhe viewed the too happy Grovesby, and the tears of mortification ſtarted from her eye as ſhe glanced with envious ſcorn over the amiable form of her hated rival.

On the first opportunity she left the room. To see Grovesby basking in the sunshine of felicity, in despite of her wretched contrivances, was more than she could bear; and inspired her with all the discordant passions of love, hatred, pride, and disappointed malice! She, in a state of frenzy, determined to put a period to that existence, which from early youth had been actuated by no other principles than envy, and rude tempestuous passion! For this purpose she had recourse to a loaded pistol; a brace of which Sir Paulet always kept in the closet.

With trembling hands she reached it from the place where it was deposited—and viewed it with an eye wide-stretched in the pursuit of misery eternal!

“I will not live!”—she cried,—“Grovesby is happy!—while I, a dupe to my own artifice, am wretched beyond relief!—He is calm—and knows not the torture of unrequited love—but I will not witness his happiness longer!—I will not again behold the bewitching charms of my too happy rival!—Life on such terms is insupportable!—No! rather let me thus free myself of every care! . . . Now smile who may, for I shall know no more!”

The report of the pistol alarmed the house; Grovesby first entered—the spectacle was too dreadful to be viewed without horror!

“Wretched woman!” he cried, “how must thy soul be tortured, ere thus thou couldst arrive at this height of desperation!—and how has the destructive tide of ungovernable passion sunk thee beneath thyself!”

Mr. Bryant and Grovesby undertook to accompany Sir Paulet through this scene of mortality; and Terentia would not be denied

nied attending them ; as the felicity which she was sensible Mr. Grovesby would derive from such a consideration, by far over-balanced in her gentle heart, the disagreeableness of the undertaking.

The Baronet, charmed with the amiable softness of her disposition, and gratified by the kind attention she paid him, as soon as the funeral was over, accompanied them to an elegant villa, the residence of Mr. Grovesby ; declaring that the interest of his children should be, in future, his only care.

Mr. Sackville spent a month at Hatfield Grove ; a week of which was dedicated to the gratifying his ambition in celebrating the nuptials of his children, by keeping open house, and exhibiting every other demonstration of joy usual on such occasions.

He then, in company with the Bryants, paid the promised visit to Mr. Fairfax ; where Henry, in the society of Sophia, forgot those disappointments and unfortunate contingencies which had embittered his life. A reciprocal affection soon took place ; and, in a short time the sacred rite of Hymen, completed their felicity.

By the desire of Terentia, Mr. Sackville purchased for his favourite a handsome house near the residence of Grovesby ; and having prevailed on the Bryants to reside entirely with him, he spent a cheerful evening to his day of life !—and Henry, Grovesby, Sophia, and Terentia, amidst the deceit, folly, and interested principles of modern attachments, experienced, in the strictest sense of the word, the blessings of that true friendship which is so essential to the felicity of human nature.



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